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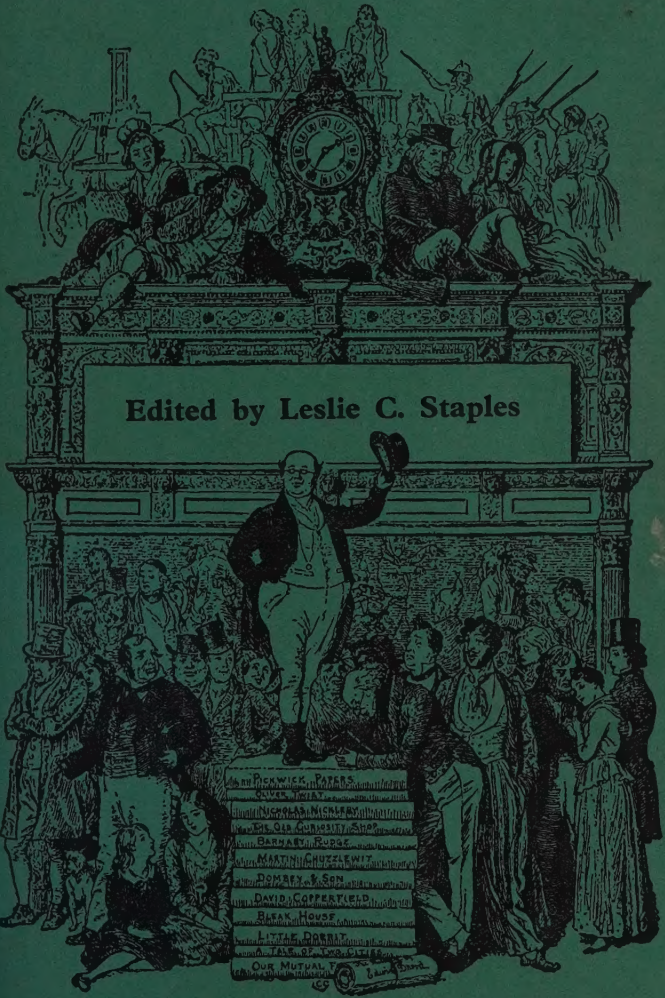

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These are the first four volumes in the Macmillan Illustrated Edition. They are to be followed in June by *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Pickwick Papers* and *Dombey and Son*, and further volumes will follow later. The books are uniformly bound in green cloth with gold lettering, and include the illustrations by Phiz., George Cruikshank and Marcus Stone.

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"The chattels of Mrs. Bloss were forwarded by instalments. First there came a large hamper of Guinness's stout and an umbrella . . ."

LATER

"'Married!' cried Mrs. Bloss, taking the pill and a draught of Guinness—'Married! Unpossible!'"

(From 'Sketches by Boz')

Guinness is brewed today from the same ingredients, and by essentially the same methods, as in 1836, when 'Boz' published his Sketches—and for that matter in 1759, when Guinness was first brewed in Dublin. It is as good for us as it was for our great-great-great grandfathers.

GUINNESS IS GOOD FOR YOU

G.E.2207

C

Frederick Dickens

see page 123

photograph by Mulnier, Paris

Dickens House Collection

THE DICKENSIAN

SUMMER NUMBER

VOL. L. JUNE 1954 No. 311

WHEN FOUND—

The theatre of Crummles Students of theatrical history are greatly interested in the restoration of the late eighteenth-century theatre at Richmond, Yorks. Built around 1780, flourishing until about 1820, it has, till recently, been put to almost every conceivable misuse. A few years ago, however, the public spirited Town Clerk, Mr. David Brooks, succeeded in commencing a thorough restoration, now temporarily suspended for lack of funds. We recently had an opportunity of inspecting it. Here, and probably nowhere else in the country, is the possibility of seeing such a theatre as shown by *Phiz* in his plate, " The Great Bespeak for Miss Snevellici," and a fascinating experience it is. Here alone is precisely such a playhouse as those in which Crummles played, and Dickensians the world over are greatly indebted to Mr. Brooks for his efforts and will wish him every success in the completion of his invaluable project. It is hoped to restore the theatre, which will hold about 350 people, to full use. On the occasion of our visit, Mr. Brooks gave a delightful demonstration of the manner in which the old actors used such a stage with its *apron* and stage doors. The privileged audience that day were transported, as never before, direct to the theatre of 150 years ago. Any donations to the Restoration Fund would be gladly received at the Town Clerk's Office, Richmond, Yorks.

* * * * *

Dickens Drama at Birmingham Following the successful production of a dramatic adaption of *Hard Times*, by Mr. Victor Simons last year, the Birmingham Branch of the Dickens Fellowship have this year added *Martin Chuzzlewit* to their repertory. The work of the same skilful adapter, the play was produced by Mr. Simons himself, aided by Mr. John Venables. The result was one of the best performances in the history of the Branch.

* * * * *

Jo's forge Until a few weeks ago, visitors to Chalk, the village in which Dickens spent his honeymoon, could inspect the forge which was photographically described as that of Jo Gargery in *Great Expectations*. A little the worse for wear, owing to German attention between 1939 and 1944, it was still possible to lean out the half-door and talk to the smith as he worked, as did Dickens himself to old Mullender, whose son and successor we ourselves can easily remember. Now the forge has closed its doors owing to lack of horses in the neighbourhood, and the bellows and anvil are silenced for ever.

* * * * *

Congratulations All good wishes to Mr. Philip Henry Charles Dickens, great-grandson of the novelist, and his bride, formerly Miss Julia Hodgkinson, who were married on April 24th.

LESLIE C. STAPLES

PORTRAITS IN "A PARLIAMENTARY SKETCH"

By William J. Carlton

IN the first number of the *Evening Chronicle*, a new London daily newspaper published on January 31st, 1835, appeared the first of a series of twenty "Sketches of London" over the signature "Boz." The remaining sketches were published at irregular intervals in the course of the next seven months; but we are concerned here with only two of them—"The House" in the issue of March 7th and "Bellamy's Kitchen" in that of April 11th. These two papers were merged into one for the second series of the collected *Sketches by Boz*, published by Macrone in December, 1836, and were given a new title: "A Parliamentary Sketch, with a Few Portraits." This title was curtailed to "A Parliamentary Sketch" in the 1839 edition published by Chapman & Hall, and so it remained in all subsequent editions.

A comparison of the text of "The House" and "Bellamy's Kitchen," as printed in the newspaper, with the later version reveals that a good many changes had been made in the interval. Some, but by no means all of them, were necessitated by the new form of publication. One paragraph—the last—of "The House" was omitted from the volume. "There are a few more portraits—some in the body of the house, others in the galleries—which we should like to lay before our readers," Dickens had written. "We have exhausted our space, and must therefore reserve them for our next sketch, which will be entitled 'Bellamy's'." This paragraph, which of course became redundant when the two papers were combined, emphasizes the significance of the four last words of the original title—a significance which has escaped the notice of the commentators.

Professor Saintsbury, in the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, singled out "A Parliamentary Sketch" as perhaps the best of all the *Sketches by Boz*. Others have drawn attention to the spirited account of the expulsion from the House of a too-insistent intruder, the graphic description of Bellamy's kitchen and the delightful picture of Nicholas, the butler. But none of them appears to have realised that in this particular essay the author set out deliberately, not only to depict scenes he had himself witnessed in the course of his duties as a parliamentary reporter, but to present his readers with thumbnail portraits of some of the prominent members of the legislature whose appearance and characteristics were familiar to him. Although not all readily identifiable after the lapse of nearly 120 years, these portraits must have been immediately recognised by those who unwittingly sat for them as well as by many of their colleagues and contemporaries.

Only a few months before "The House" was published early in March, 1835, the country had been convulsed by a general election which one observer called "the most violent electioneering struggle ever witnessed in England." Young Dickens had played his part in the campaign by reporting for the *Morning*

Chronicle the speeches of many of the candidates—at Braintree, Chelmsford, and elsewhere. It resulted in the return to power of the Conservatives under Sir Robert Peel, faced by a strong and determined Opposition. The new House of Commons met for the election of the Speaker on February 19th in the temporary building provided for their accommodation on the site of the chamber destroyed by fire in the previous October; and the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne was moved by Viscount Sandon on February 24th.

Charles Dickens, whose paper was dashed off within a week or so of the opening of parliament, must have been a keenly observant eyewitness of the scene on that occasion. After a preliminary paragraph intimating that his readers might be entertained by " a slight sketch of the general aspect of ' the House ' and the crowds that resort to it on the night of an important debate," remarking parenthetically that " we have made some few calls at the aforesaid house in our time, have attended it quite often enough for our purpose, and a great deal too often for our own personal peace and comfort," he plunged at once into his subject.

" Half-past four o'clock, and at five the mover of the Address will be ' on his legs,' as the newspapers announce sometimes by way of novelty, as if speakers were occasionally in the habit of standing on their heads. What a scene of bustle and excitement ! The members are pouring in, one after the other, in shoals. The few spectators who can obtain standing room in the passages, scrutinise them as they pass with the utmost interest, and the man who can identify a member occasionally becomes a person of great importance. Every now and then you hear earnest whispers of ' That's Sir John Thomson.' ' Which? him with the gilt order round his neck? ' ' No, no; that's one of the messengers —that other with the yellow gloves is Sir John Thomson.' ' Here's Mr. Smith.' ' Lor ! ' ' Yes, how d'ye do, sir ?—(He is our new member)—How do you do, sir ? ' Mr. Smith stops: turns round with an air of enchanting urbanity (for the rumour of an intended dissolution has been very extensively circulated this morning); seizes both the hands of his gratified constituent, and, after greeting him with the most enthusiastic warmth, rushes into the lobby with an extraordinary display of ardour in the public cause, leaving an immense impression in his favour on the mind of his ' fellow-townsman.'

" The arrivals increase in number, and the heat and noise increase in very unpleasant proportion. The livery servants form a complete lane on either side of the passage, and you reduce yourself into the smallest possible space to avoid being turned out. You see that stout man with the hoarse voice, in the blue coat, queer-crowned, broad-brimmed hat, white corduroy breeches, and great boots, who has been talking incessantly for half an hour past, and whose importance has occasioned no small quantity of mirth among the strangers. That is the great conservator of the peace of Westminster. You cannot fail to have remarked the grace with which he saluted the Noble Lord who passed just now, or the excessive dignity of his air as he expostulates with the crowd . . . "

This brief glimpse of the Serjeant-at-Arms might have served to describe any one of the holders of that office in Dickens's day and can hardly be called a portrait. But when he came to write of the Members themselves "Boz" entered into almost photographic detail. Some of them had not sat in the House before, but some were well known to him as M.P.s in the previous parliament while others had returned to the scene after absences of varying duration. Among those in the last of these categories was Colonel Sibthorp (or, to give him his full name, Charles de

Colonel Sibthorp as Caricatured by *Punch*
Kindly lent by *History Today*

Laet Waldo Sibthorp), M.P. for Lincoln, who had represented that constituency since 1826 save for a brief interval in 1833-34 when he was ousted by Sir Edward Bulwer. Here is Dickens's pen-portrait of the Member for Lincoln:

"You see this ferocious-looking personage, with a complexion almost as sallow as his linen, and whose large black mustachios would give him the appearance of a figure in a hair-dresser's window, if his countenance possessed one ray of the intelligence communicated to those waxen caricatures of the human face divine. He is a militia-man, with a brain slightly damaged, and (quite unintentionally) the most amusing person in the House. Can anything be more exquisitely absurd than the

burlesque grandeur of his air, as he strides up to the lobby, his eyes rolling like those of a Turk's head in a cheap Dutch clock? He never appears without that bundle of dirty papers which he carries under his left arm—they are generally supposed to be the miscellaneous estimates for 1804, or some equally important documents. You must often have seen him in the box-lobbies of the theatres during the vacation. He is very punctual in his attendance at the House, and his self-satisfield 'He—ar He—ar' is not unfrequently the signal for a general titter.

"This is the man who once actually sent a messenger up to the Strangers' Gallery in the old House of Commons, to inquire the name of a gentleman who was using an eye-glass, in order that he (the Militia-man) might complain to the Speaker that the individual in question was quizzing him! On another occasion, he repaired to Bellamy's kitchen—a refreshment-room, where persons who are not Members are admitted on sufferance, as it were—and perceiving two or three gentlemen at supper, who he was aware were not Members, and could not in that place very well resent his insolence, he indulged in the exquisite pleasantry and gentlemanly facetiousness of sitting with his booted leg on the table at which they were supping! He is generally harmless, and his absurdities are amusing enough."

Although Boz was careful to mention no name, there can be no mistaking the identity of the ferocious-looking militia-man whose eccentricities he hit off with such pungent humour. Colonel Sibthorp, then in his early fifties, came of an old family long connected with Lincoln. The borough had been represented before him by his father, his grand-uncle and the latter's father in succession. He was Colonel of the South Lincoln Militia and a Deputy-Lieutenant and magistrate for the county. In politics he belonged to the ultra-Tory party and was the embodiment of old-fashioned prejudice. He opposed in all their stages the Catholic Emancipation Bill, the Reform Bill and the Public Libraries Bill, and was one of the last opponents of free trade. A notorious figure in political life, his foibles were pilloried for many years in *Punch*, which called him "Mother Goose of Lincoln." His extraordinary appearance attracted general attention and lent itself to caricature.

The accuracy of Dickens's portrait may be gauged from that of another journalist who noted some of the "personal and oratorical peculiarities" of leading M.P.s between 1830 and 1835. "Colonel Sibthorp's countenance is altogether unique," wrote James Grant. "Two or three other senators rejoice in tufts, and a few more in whiskers of decent proportions; but compared with the mustachios and whiskers of the gallant Colonel, one feels indignant that they should be dignified by the name . . . He is extremely proud of his whiskers and mustachios. He would do and suffer a good deal for his party and principles; but rather than submit to be shaved, he would see Tories, Toryism, Constitution, and all, scattered to the four winds . . . In his left hand there is always a roll of papers confusedly put together, just as if he had caught them floating in the water when he was in the act of drowning . . . He scarcely ever opens his mouth without exciting the laughter

of the House . . . In his serious moods he is a bore to his own party, as well as an infliction on the House generally.[1]

Certain expressions in this particular sketch by "Boz" would almost certainly be deemed libellous to-day, and it would be surprising if they did not provoke a protest from some readers of the *Evening Chronicle*. However that may be, the newspaper article underwent a somewhat drastic revision before its publication in more permanent form. "Militia-man" became "militia-officer," "personage" and "man" were replaced by "gentleman," "one ray of intelligence" by "the thought," and "insolence" by "behaviour." "He is reported to have repaired to Bellamy's kitchen" was substituted for the categorical statement in the newspaper, while the references to "a brain slightly damaged," "the box-lobbies of the theatres," "gentlemanly facetiousness" and "absurdities" were expunged altogether.

Two Members of a very different stamp were the next to be noticed. They were dismissed in a few lines.

"That smart-looking fellow, in the black coat with velvet facing and cuffs, who wears his D'Orsay hat so rakishly, is 'Honest Tom,' a metropolitan representative; and the large man in the cloak with the white lining—not the man by the pillar; the other with the light hair hanging over his coat collar behind—is his colleague."

"Honest Tom" (as he came to be known familiarly by many of his admirers) was Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, one of the two Radical members returned by the newly-created borough of Finsbury in July 1834 and again in the following November. He had previously sat for Hertford. Handsome and popular, Duncombe was something of a dandy and enjoyed the reputation of being the best-dressed man in the House. He was on terms of cordial friendship with Lady Blessington and her circle, including Count D'Orsay, and is said to have been the hero of one of her ladyship's novels. Thomas Creevy, the diarist, called him "our flash Tom Duncombe."[2]

Duncombe's colleague, the other member for Finsbury, was Thomas Wakley. Better known as the founder and editor of *The Lancet* than as a politician, he was tall and good-looking, with a fair complexion and blond hair. Dickens was to see more of him when, as Coroner for West Middlesex in 1840, Wakley held an inquest on the body of an infant, the novelist being a member of the jury which had to decide whether the mother had committed murder or the minor offence of concealment of birth. The favourable impression produced on Dickens by the coroner's conduct of the inquest led him to apply to Wakley, in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, the words "nobly patient and humane."

But let us continue our survey of Boz's gallery of parliamentary portraits. "That quiet gentlemanly-looking man in the blue surtout, grey trousers, white neckerchief, and gloves, whose

[1] *Random Recollections of the House of Commons*, by One of No Party (1836).

[2] Little more than three years later, when Dickens wrote the opening chapters of *Nicholas Nickleby*, he incorporated in it an account of the inaugural meeting of the United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company. One of the three M.P.s who, with Mr. Ralph Nickleby, attended the meeting is described as wearing patent boots, lemon-coloured kid gloves, and a fur coat-collar. According to G. W. E. Russell, this is "a capital sketch of Tom Duncombe, Radical Member for Finsbury." (*Collections and Recollections*, by One Who has Kept a Diary, 1899)

closely buttoned coat displays his manly figure and broad chest to great advantage, is a very well-known character. He has fought a great many battles in his time, and conquered like the heroes of old, with no other arms than those the gods gave him."

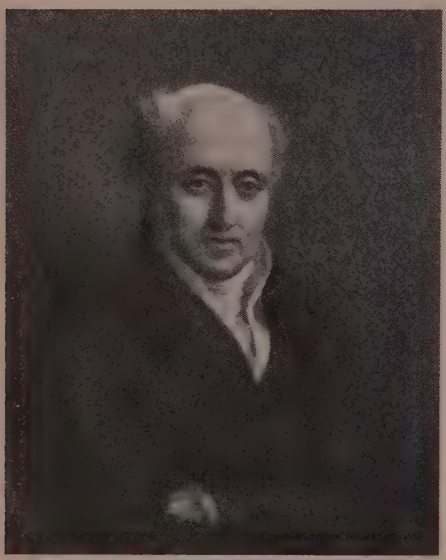
Here again there is no room for doubt as to the man Dickens had in mind. John Gully, M.P. for Pontefract since 1832, had many years earlier acquired a great reputation as a prize-fighter and was still remembered by patrons of the ring on account of his epic contest in 1805 with the redoubtable Henry Pearce ("the Game Chicken"), which lasted three-quarters of an hour and extended to 77 rounds. Almost blinded, Gully at last threw up the sponge. In 1807 and again in 1808 he beat Bob Gregson, the Lancashire giant, and in the latter year declined the title of Champion of England. Gully continued to represent Pontefract until July 1837, lived to be nearly 80, married twice, and had a dozen children by each of his wives. It will be remembered that the Game Chicken was the chief instructor of Mr. Toots in "those gentle arts which refine and humanise existence," and was always to be heard of at the bar of the Black Badger. He wore a shaggy white great-coat in the warmest weather, and knocked Mr. Toots about the head three times a week for the small consideration of ten and six per visit.

John Gully, M.P.

Boz's next portrait was, for some unexplained reason, omitted entirely from the collected sketches, and the subject of it awaits identification. "The elderly man with the bald head and thin face who is leaning against the wall, perusing the leading article of the *soi-disant* 'Leading Journal,' is the identical 'old country gentleman' who has lived for two-thirds of his whole existence exactly one minute and a quarter's walk from Blackfriars-bridge."

One of the most detailed descriptions in the whole series is that of George Byng, who shared with Joseph Hume the representation of Middlesex. "The old hard-featured man . . . is really a good

specimen of that class of men now nearly extinct. He is a county Member, and has been from time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary. Look at his loose wide brown coat, with capacious pockets on each side; the knee-breeches and boots, the immensely long waistcoat, and silver watch-chain dangling below it, the wide-brimmed brown hat, and white handkerchief tied in a great bow, with straggling ends sticking out beyond his shirt-frill. It is a costume one seldom sees nowadays, and when the few who wear it have died off, it will be extinct too. He can tell you long stories of Fox, Pitt, Sheridan and Canning, and how much better the House was managed in those times, when they used to get up at eight or nine o'clock, except on regular field days, of which everybody was apprized beforehand. He has a great contempt for all young Members of Parliament, and thinks it quite impossible that a man can say anything worth hearing, unless he has sat in the House for fifteen years at least, without saying anything at all. He is of opinion that 'that young Macaulay' was a regular impostor; he allows that Lord Stanley may do something one of these days, but 'He's too young, Sir—too young.' He is an excellent authority on points of precedent, and when he grows talkative, after his wine, will tell you how Sir Somebody Something, when he was whipper-in for the Government, brought four men out of their beds to vote in the majority, three of whom died on their way home again; how the House once divided on the question, that fresh candles be now brought in; how the Speaker was once upon a time left in the chair by accident, at the conclusion of business, and was obliged to sit in the House by himself for three hours, till some Member could be knocked up and brought back again, to move the adjournment—and a great many other anecdotes of a similar description.



George Byng, M.P.

"There he stands, leaning on his stick; looking at the throng of Exquisites around him with most profound contempt. . ."

A great-grandson of Admiral Byng, the first Viscount Torrington, George Byng was the eldest son of George Byng, M.P.

for Middlesex from 1780 to 1784. He had himself represented that county since 1790 and continued to do so until his death in January 1847. A consistent advocate of parliamentary reform, he supported Grey's motion in 1793 and voted for every measure of the kind introduced in the House, although he opposed all attempts to amend the Act of 1832. As the county member he had the backing of the whole Liberal party and for some years before his death enjoyed the distinction of being the " father of the House of Commons."

The next to be noticed was an unknown Irish journalist on the floor of the House. " You are curious to know who that young man in the rough great-coat is, who has accosted every Member who has entered the House since we have been standing here. He is not a Member; he is only an ' hereditary bondsman,' or, in other words, an Irish correspondent of an Irish newspaper, who has just procured his forty-second frank from a Member whom he never saw in his life before. There he goes again—another! Bless the man, he has his hat and pockets full already."

Conducting his readers now to the Reporters' Gallery (with which the House of Commons was provided for the first time in its history), Dickens could not resist another sly dig at " our warlike friend with the moustachios, sitting on the back seat against the wall, behind the Member who is speaking, looking as ferocious and intelligent as usual." He goes on to describe Bellamy's kitchen and, at great length, the butler Nicholas—an admirable example of Dickensian humour. This is followed by brief notices of some of the habitués of Bellamy's " whose station or absurdities render them the most worthy of remark."

" It is half-past twelve o'clock, and as the division is not expected for an hour or two, a few Members are lounging away the time here in preference to standing at the bar of the House, or sleeping in one of the side galleries. That singularly awkward and ungainly-looking man, in the brownish-white hat, with the straggling black trousers which reach about half-way down the legs of his boots, who is leaning against the meat-screen, apparently deluding himself into the belief that he is thinking about something, is a splendid example of a Member of the House of Commons concentrating in his own person the wisdom of a constituency. Observe the wig, of a dark hue but indescribable colour, for if it be naturally brown, it has acquired a black tint by long service, and if it be naturally black, the same cause has imparted to it a tinge of rusty brown; and remark how very materially the great blinker-like spectacles assist the expression of that most intelligent face. Seriously speaking, did you ever see a countenance so expressive of the most hopeless extreme of heavy dullness, or behold a form so strangely put together? He is no great speaker: but when he *does* address the House, the effect is absolutely irresistible." The identity of the wearer of the wig and spectacles remains unknown.

" The small gentleman with the sharp nose, who has just saluted him, is a Member of Parliament, an ex-Alderman, and a sort of amateur fireman. He, and the celebrated fireman's dog, were observed to be remarkably active at the conflagration of

the two Houses of Parliament—they both ran up and down, and in an out, getting under people's feet, and into everybody's way, fully impressed with the belief that they were doing a great deal of good, and barking tremendously. The dog went quietly back to his kennel with the engine, but the gentleman kept up such an incessant noise for some weeks after the occurrence that he became a positive nuisance. As no more parliamentary fires have occurred, however, and as he has consequently had no more opportunities of writing to the newspapers to relate how, by way of preserving pictures he cut them out of their frames, and performed other great national services, he has gradually relapsed into his old state of calmness."

The ex-Alderman was William Hughes Hughes, who had held that office for the Portsoken Ward of the City of London in 1832 until unseated by a judgment of the Court of King's Bench. After two unsuccessful attempts to enter parliament, he was elected M.P. for Oxford in March 1833 and re-elected in 1835 as a moderate Reformer; but he afterwards became definitely associated with the Conservative party. Hughes claimed to have been the first M.P. on the spot after the outbreak of the fire, and in a letter to *The Times* a week later said that he had arranged for many objects of value to be taken to his residence in Manchester Buildings. He directed "the careful removal of the portraits of the Speakers from the suite of lower rooms, for which purpose they were taken out of their frames, which were too large to be safely conveyed through the doorways."

"The Lord's-Day-Bill Baronet, who has just chucked under the chin" the shorter of the two waitresses, was, of course, Sir Andrew Agnew, Bart., M.P. for Wigtown County, whose persistence in promoting legislation for the stricter observance of Sunday provoked Dickens to write *Sunday Under Three Heads* in the following year, under the pseudonym "Timothy Sparks." If James Grant is to be believed, Sir Andrew never spoke in the House except on the one topic which was his obsession.

Dickens has a good deal to say about the taller waitress, Jane, whom he calls "the Hebe of Bellamy's" and who was as great a character as Nicholas, in her way. In his *Random Recollections of the Midland Circuit* (1873), Robert Walton, a shorthand writer who claimed to have had a slight acquaintance with the novelist in his reporting days, assures us that Dickens used to pay so much attention to the tall waitress that she was called "Dickens's Long Jane." "Her leading features," wrote Boz, "are a thorough contempt for the great majority of her visitors; her predominant quality, love of admiration, as you cannot fail to observe if you mark the glee with which she listens to something the young Member near her mutters somewhat unintelligibly in her ear (for his speech is rather thick from some cause or other), and how playfully she digs the handle of a fork into the arm with which he detains her, by way of reply. Jane is no bad hand at repartees, and showers them about, with a degree of liberality and total absence of reserve or constraint, which occasionally excites no small amazement in the minds of strangers. She cuts jokes with Nicholas, too, but looks up to him with a great deal of respect . . ."

The last portraits in the sketch are of "two persons who are seated at the table in the corner, at the farther end of the room. They have been constant guests here for many years past; and one of them has feasted within these walls many a time, with the most brilliant characters of a brilliant period. He has gone up to the other House since then; the greater part of his boon companions have shared Yorick's fate, and his visits to Bellamy's are comparatively few. If he really be eating his supper now, at what hour can he have dined! A second solid mass of rump-steak has disappeared, and he ate the first in four minutes and three-quarters, by the clock over the window. Was there ever such a personification of Falstaff! Mark the air with which he gloats over that Stilton, as he removes the napkin which has been placed beneath his chin to catch the superfluous gravy of the steak, and with what gusto he imbibes the porter which has been fetched, expressly for him, in the pewter pot. Listen to the hoarse sound of that voice, kept down as it is by layers of solids, and deep draughts of rich wine, and tell us if you ever saw such a perfect picture of a regular *gourmand* . . .

"What an amusing contrast between his voice and appearance and that of the spare, squeaking old man, who sits at the same table, and who, elevating a little cracked bantam sort of voice to its highest pitch, invokes damnation upon his own eyes or somebody else's at the commencement of every sentence he utters. 'The Captain,' as they call him, is a very old frequenter of Bellamy's; much addicted to stopping 'after the House is up' (an inexpiable crime in Jane's eyes), and a complete walking reservoir of spirits and water. The old Peer—or rather, the old man, for his peerage is of comparatively recent date—has a huge tumbler of hot punch brought him; and the other damns and drinks, and drinks and damns, and smokes."

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to say now which of the dozen or so members of the new House of Commons who rejoiced in the title of Captain was the "spare, squeaking old man" who attracted attention by damning, drinking and smoking in Bellamy's. Nor, in the absence of more precise details, would it be an easy matter to determine who was his Falstaffian companion among the Members recently elevated to the peerage.

The writing of vivid impressionist sketches of the parliamentary scene and some of its leading figures is generally held to have originated with Edward Michael Whitty, an Irish journalist who in 1852 and 1853 contributed to *The Leader*, an influential London weekly, a series of sketches on men and manners in both Houses, tinged with a vein of mordant sarcasm. But Charles Dickens anticipated Whitty in this new style of reporting, with its emphasis on the personal rather than the political side of parliament, by nearly twenty years. We know that he was an expert shorthand writer and an accomplished journalist before he achieved fame as the most popular of English novelists. In virtue of his two papers in the *Evening Chronicle* of 1835, Dickens would seem to have ensured for himself a place in the forefront, if not indeed at the head, of a long line of parliamentary sketch writers.

A RE-EXAMINATION OF *EDWIN DROOD*

By William W. Bleifuss
Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri.

I

NO book by Charles Dickens has received so much attention as his half-finished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The convolutions of the plot, which includes a strange disappearance and a series of lesser mysteries, have intrigued writers for years. Unfortunately many of these writers see the novel as a detective story and fail to note how similar in theme, characterisation, and development it is to the other Dickens novels. Instead of remaining faithful to their author, they follow a pattern of inquiry worthy of Sherlock Holmes himself.

The following remarks on *Edwin Drood* will reveal some of the weaknesses in previous commentaries on the novel. But more important, my interpretation will also consider Dickens's methods of writing, such as his characterisation and technique of plot development, as well as his basic interests and themes. We shall see that his last novel follows the pattern that characterises his mature work.

To examine *Edwin Drood* as though its author were Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Dick Datchery were an early incarnation of Sherlock Holmes has been a common error.[1] After all, Doyle did not introduce Sherlock Holmes to the reading public until 1887 when he published *A Study in Scarlet*, which instigated, more than anything else, the vogue of the detective story in England. Wilkie Collins's novels, *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*, were forerunners of detective stories, but Dickens in *Edwin Drood* was not anticipating Doyle and only in part echoing Collins. Though he certainly was aware of the success that the latter enjoyed, he was not, as we shall see, writing a dective story.[2]

While playing detective the Droodians have failed to see the novelist and his novels, and thereby have lost the spirit of Dickens. To regain it one nineteenth-century American went so far as to consult a medium for the answers.[3] Percy Carden in *The Murder of Edwin Drood* (London, 1920) surveyed every square foot of Rochester, the " original " for Cloisterham, in his efforts to prove that the topography of the real city dictated what happened in the fictional city. Howard Duffield a few years ago was content with

[1] For that matter Sherlock Holmes has been called in by at least two writers. In Andrew Lang's " At the Sign of the Ship," published in *Longman's Magazine*, XLVI (September, 1905), 473-480, Dr. Watson and Holmes agree that Edwin Drood is disguised as Datchery and that Jasper was to kill Neville Landless. Harry Bache Smith also assigned Holmes to the Drood mystery. (" Sherlock Holmes Solves the Mystery of Edwin Drood," *Munsey's Magazine*, LXXXIII [December, 1924], 385-400; the material in this article appeared in expanded form in a privately published book a few years later: *How Sherlock Holmes Solved the Mystery of Edwin Drood* [Glen Rock, Pa., 1934].) His conclusions are similar to mine, but he arrives at them through Sherlockian deduction and not through critical appraisal or understanding of Dickens as an artist.

One of the interesting continuations of the novel is the detective story *Epilogue* (Philadelphia, 1934) by Bruce Graeme, pseudonym of G. M. Jeffries. In his book two London detectives arrive at Cloisterham to solve the mystery surrounding the disappearance of Edwin. After a long court-room scene Jasper is found guilty of the murder of his nephew. One of the more striking events in the novel is the brutal slaying of Datchery. The opium woman is revealed to be Jasper's grandmother.

[2] Robert P. Ashley, " Wilkie Collins and the Detective Story," *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, VI (June, 1951), 47-60.

[3] *The Mystery Pen of Edwin Drood Complete, Part the Second*, " By the Spirit Pen of Charles Dickens, Through a Medium " (Brattleborough, Vermont, 1873).

nothing less than a literary perambulation to India and a detailed examination of the voluminous literature on Thugs and Stranglers.[1] Felix Aylmer studied the Moslem culture for his article in *The Dickensian* where he attempted to prove that John Jasper was the illegitimate half-brother of Edwin Drood.[2]

If he were alive, Dickens would probably be amused by these investigations, but he would also be puzzled at the solutions and conclusions that have been fabricated to fit the twenty-three extant chapters of his novel. He would justifiably be annoyed at the critics, for their indifference to his art and their failure to understand his literary style and dominant interests have given us several dubious interpretations of *Edwin Drood*.

Dickens neither wrote a tale that only a Sherlock Holmes could solve, nor did he set his imagination at work to produce a story about Thugs, secret Indian societies, and British imperialism. *Edwin Drood* is what a reader of Dickens would expect: a study of the conflict between good and evil.

The vindictive John Jasper incarnates evil, which throughout the novel oppresses his various victims, Rosa Bud, Helena and Neville Landless, and Edwin Drood. The disappearance of Edwin is but one element in the plot, for Dickens is as much interested in the psychological problems facing Jasper, problems augmented by his addiction to opium and his powers as a mesmerist. But the novelist is also concerned with the " education " of young Neville, as well as with the development of Edwin, for I am assuming, without offering proof now, that Edwin was not murdered by his uncle. The theme of self-realisation and self-discipline, a theme Dickens often liked to use, is explicit in the contrast between Helena and Neville; the latter, before the end of the book, Dickens implies, must assume the steadiness and sense of responsibility his sister has, or else die in the attempt. Miss Twinkleton's education program is ridiculed, but not condemned; though it does not seem to help the students, it apparently does not hurt them either. Dickens's perennial interest in philanthropy is exploited in his characterisation of Mr. Honeythunder, the ridiculous professional philanthropist. Mayor Sapsea with his pronouncements about life and mankind is a link between the subsidiary themes of education and philanthropy. His foolish philosophising and Honeythunder's misguided and uncharitable approach to philanthropy are contrasted with the common sense and charity of both Mr. Grewgious and Mr. Crisparkle.

Integral to the plot is the theme of appearance and reality, represented not only in the characters but also in the setting and plot. The best instance of this theme is Jasper, whose character and personality are interpreted differently by almost every person he meets. The Jasper Rosa knows, for example, is quite different from the Jasper whom Mr. Crisparkle sees. The reader, though closest to understanding the real Jasper, is also aware at the same time of the many forms his personality assumes. Mayor Sapsea and Mr. Honeythunder see themselves as enlightened, prudent leaders, though to everyone else they are impostors and hypocrites.

[1] " John Jasper—Strangler," *Bookman*, LXXI (February, 1930), 581-588.
[2] " First Aid for the ' Drood ' Audience," *The Dickensian*, 1951, 133-137.

The Edwin-Rosa affair at the beginning of the story is in appearance very different from the reality. Even Jasper is misled. He also thinks that both Durdles and Deputy are tools that he can manipulate at will; we can assume, I think, that he misjudges the actual states of affairs. The opium he smokes transposes for him reality and appearance until he is unable to distinguish between them. Similarly his use of drugs and his mesmeric powers are part of the general theme of appearance and reality. Perhaps Helena too would have been given the opportunity through her mesmeric gifts to transform appearance into reality.

It appears to everyone that Edwin is dead; the reality, we shall see, is quite different. Bazzard apparently is merely a gloomy law clerk; however, he is the author of a play, *The Thorn of Anxiety*, and is a member of a literary society. Mr. Crisparkle seems to be an ordinary clergyman (his mother certainly does not understand her son), but in reality he is a competent and intelligent man with a keen insight into human problems. Mr. Grewgious appears to be merely an angular and crotchety lawyer; actually he is the one man able to see through to the core of everyone else. Dick Datchery, next to Jasper, is the most important personification of the theme. In appearance he is a harmless, innocent, old man, but there is every indication that he will triumph over Jasper.

In using as a setting the sleepy and apparently peaceful town of Cloisterham, Dickens was enhancing the theme of appearance and reality, for the town is a focus of evil forces. Even the cathedral is not the same building to everyone who frequents it. It may be a sanctuary for the religious, but it is also a satanic hall for Jasper, a shooting gallery for Deputy, a monument to his worthiness for Mayor Sapsea, and a tippling room for Durdles. Dickens probably would have used it for the scene of Jasper's downfall.

The mystery surrounding young Drood, of course, is central. That does not mean, however, that Dickens was writing an ordinary detective story and was trying to keep secret the identity of the wrong-doers. In *Edwin Drood* we know who is the source of evil; we know that a crime has been planned though we may not be sure whether or not it has been carried out. To Dickens, as to Dostoevsky, the intention and desire to commit crime, to do evil, were as reprehensible as the action itself. The exposure of Jasper, whether he was a murderer or not, was what mattered to Dickens. He could analyse moral problems in his perennial pursuit of justice without having to include a murder.

We do not need to practice the subleties of a Sherlock Holmes while cogitating over the novel; we would do better to consider Mr. Grewgious's reverence for justice and the spirit of the law. As in his other novels the desire to find moral equilibrium is Dickens's dominant interest in this book. We do not need a murder or a specific crime, but we do need evil; and that is found in abundance in John Jasper. His evil is felt whether he kills Edwin or not. The uncle's murder of his nephew would add nothing to the story as a dramatisation of moral problems.

Edwin Drood is not a sudden departure from the traditional Dickensian pattern, a fact many writers fail to recognise. Dickens, himself, according to John Forster's biography, outlined briefly

a plot about two young people who are separated and then meet again after many years to marry, which suggests that the first plan was to re-unite Edwin and Rosa. Forster noted that Dickens later changed his mind about the plot, but there is no record that the novelist intended this book to be strikingly different from the others. He merely told his biographer that the plot would contain a " very curious and new idea."

G. K. Chesterton, among others, erred when he assumed that *Edwin Drood* was to be a new type of novel: " His last book represents yet another new departure, dividing him from the chaotic Dickens of days long before." In " this almost sombre fragment " he failed to find any marked resemblances to the other books.[1] Behind this inaccurate conclusion was the over-emphasis by Chesterton and others of the comic elements in the early novels. The similarities that we shall note are far more important than the differences. The " watched by the dead " theme Richard A. Proctor discussed so ably more than sixty-five years ago was a favorite with Dickens and appeared in some form in many of his works, notably in *Barnaby Rudge, No Thoroughfare, Our Mutual Friend*—and *Edwin Drood*.[2] In comparing the two latter novels, we see that the mystery over the disappearance of Edwin is comparable to that surrounding the disappearance of John Harmon; also the characterisation of Jasper is not greatly different from that of Bradley Headstone.

Despite the essential seriousness of the Jasper story, the many scenes of humor in the book are proportionally as numerous as are comparable scenes in the half-dozen novels immediately anteceding *Edwin Drood*. Though some of the scenes are grim enough, yet the activities within the portals of Miss Twinkleton's school, the scenes with Billickin, the world of the china shepherdess, Mrs. Crisparkle, and the Sapsea episodes are typical of Dickens and echo scenes from earlier novels. Artistically perhaps there is too great a contrast between the scenes where Jasper is the central figure and the comic interludes, but Dickens's propensity for such divergent moods is even more noticeable in *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Oliver Twist*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. The last three of these novels are certainly in quality and quantity of humor below the level in *Edwin Drood*.

Though Dickens has not lost his gift of characterisation in his last novel, at the same time his characters are in most instances similar to those we find in his other novels. Qualities that distinguish Jasper are also present in such divergent characters as Jonas Chuzzlewit, Mr. Carker, Uriah Heep, the Defarges, Silas Wegg, Bradley Headstone, and the treacherous Jules Obenreizer of the play *No Thoroughfare*, which Dickens wrote in collaboration with Wilkie Collins. Edwin in character and personality could be a brother of Mortimer Lightwood, Eugene Wrayburn, Pip, and even David Copperfield. Rosa Bud is a gentler Bella Wilfer, but the problem facing both girls, the request in wills that each shall marry a designated person, is similiar. The situation involving the opium woman is comparable to those facing good Mrs. Brown

[1] *Charles Dickens, the Last of the Great Men* (New York, 1942), pp. 169, 171.
[2] *Watched by the Dead* (London, 1887).

and Mme. Defarge. Even Mr. Crisparkle, one of the few clergymen Dickens treats with respect, is not unlike earlier Dickens characters such as Tom Pinch and Mark Tapley.

Though the many parallels to be noted are interesting, they are of little value in discussing the novel except to indicate that *Edwin Drood* is not a departure in a new direction but is in the main stream of Dickens's creative activity.

Unfortunately not enough of the detectives who have studied every word in *Edwin Drood* recognise this, but instead they blast a path for their studies by declaring that the novel has less than nothing to do with the other writings. J. Cuming Walters asserted that "*Drood* is isolated, and its position is assigned, not by comparisons, but by its own individual merits."[1] Edmund Wilson in his prelude to many hasty generalisations about the book has remarked that "we are far from the lavish improvisation of the poetical early Dickens"; the "new intensity" affected the descriptions, giving them a "nervous concentration and economy"; in conclusion he stated that "Dickens, so far as we can see, is exclusively concerned with a psychological problem."[2] Mr. Wilson, perhaps preoccupied with Dickens's "Scrooge personality," has forgotten apparently, the scenes with Sapsea, Miss Twinkleton, and Billickin, and has assumed that only the Jasper story was important.

In the last half of the book, not only would Dickens have to expose Jasper's villainy, but he would also have to provide for the Landlesses, the opium woman, Mayor Sapsea, Rosa Bud, Tartar, Mr. Honeythunder, and Dick Datchery, to say nothing of explaining the mystery of Edwin's disappearance; only then could he recount the happy marriages, the numerous progeny, and the other joyful events that always crowd the last chapter of his books.

Not only does this novel have fewer subordinate characters than most of the others, but it also was intended to be shorter than all but four. Nevertheless it has more major characters for its length than any other novel. Probably the exposure of Jasper was to dominate the concluding pages. We can safely assume that opium, mesmerism, and the gold ring were to complicate the dénouement, though it is impossible to determine how each would be involved in the story.[3]

What surprises there are in Dickens's novels arise not from the "what" but the "how." We know in *Little Dorrit* that the heroine will marry Arthur Clennam, but we wonder how it will come about; similarly with the exposure of Uriah Heep, the salvation of Sydney Carton, the re-uniting of Agnes Wickfield and David Copperfield, the understanding between Florence Dombey and her father, and the rescue of Oliver Twist we are most interested in the "how." The twistings of the plot, not the final disposition of the characters, are at the focus of the reader's attention.

[1] *The Complete Mystery of Edwin Drood* (London, 1912), p. xxiii.

[2] "Dickens: The Two Scrooges," *The Wound and the Bow* (New York, 1947), pp. 100-101.

[3] Though Dickens ordinarily did not lead his readers astray, perhaps we can accuse him of misleading them in *Great Expectations*, for it is something of a surprise when we are told that Estella is the daughter of Magwitch, who is also Pip's unknown benefactor. But both facts are disclosed long before the end of the novel; both are anticipated by Dickens, as a careful reader would note if he had only the first half of the novel and knew that he would have to fabricate the second half for himself.

There is careful preparation; most of the pieces fit together at the conclusion, except in the *non sequiturs* of some of the final chapters when Dickens dispenses his "rewards" to the deserving, rewards tacked on gratuitously for example, in *David Copperfield*, for it is hard to accept Micawber's successful "turning up" in Australia.

(To be continued)

BIRTHDAY DINNER IN LONDON

AT the Dinner held at the Café Royal on February 9th in celebration of the 142nd anniversary of the Birth of Charles Dickens, the Chairman, the Rt. Hon. SIR NORMAN BIRKETT, proposed the Toast

"THE IMMORTAL MEMORY OF CHARLES DICKENS"

He said: You will allow me, I am sure, in the first place to acknowledge the very great honour I feel it to be to have entrusted to me the presentation of this very great toast, The Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens. There is, of course, as you perceive, music in the words and the music of truth -the immortal memory. I will make bold to say that nothing that I can say can either add to or detract from the truth that lies in those musical words, and I venture to say also that nothing that the world can now say, nothing that the most hostile critic can now say, can do anything to remove that secure foundation upon which the fame of Charles Dickens rests. In truth he belongs to the ages. He is not merely a Titan of literature, but he is to be ranked amongst the great benefactors of human kind; and I think it is well and fitting that, on an occasion like this, although there is nothing new that can be said, we should meet together to render our homage to that great figure that broods over all our years.

None the less, I could have wished that you had had your President here to do it and to address you upon this great theme. I received from him some months ago a letter asking me to take his place, and I feel that my address, compared with his, must be most inadequate. I have learnt to be somewhat suspicious, I must say, of such substitutes or deputies. A great institution with which I am concerned received a letter the other day from an outlying branch asking if we could provide a suitable speaker for their dinner, and the letter said, "We do not mind if you send a professor, nor do we mind if you send a dean; but what we do require is that you will send a wit." Well, I was compelled to write back and say that we had plenty of professors and we had a plethora of deans, but the one thing we had not got was a wit; and I said, "I am most anxious to help you and I therefore enclose the names of two half-wits"! So I am always a little suspicious about the deputies. I am quite sure that you share with me our disappointment at the absence of the President, my old friend Earl Jowett, to-night.

Since I came into this building, many kind friends who are now seated here have reminded me that I proposed this toast on the

126th Anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens. This is the 142nd Anniversary—so quickly does time fly. And upon this theme, I think everybody will agree that it is almost impossible, though I have forgotten what I said on that earlier occasion, not to repeat oneself.

I have wondered whether it would not be wise to begin as a young friend of mine began a broadcast address the other evening by saying, " Ladies and gentlemen, I have delivered this address twice before; once was to a fashionable dining club in London and once to the prisoners at Her Majesty's prison at Pentonville. I therefore take this opportunity of apologising in advance if any of my hearers have heard this before! "—and he added, " on either or on both of those occasions "! I am quite sure that to an audience of Dickens lovers no apology of that kind is necessary from me.

But I must say that having that earlier address recalled to my mind recalled also this, that between 1938 and 1954 a great deal has been written and published about Charles Dickens, and I think the most notable thing is the three-volume edition of the letters written by Charles Dickens. True, they only amount to little more than half of the letters which are known to be in existence, but even those letters that are published run into 1,000,000 words; and no portrait of Charles Dickens can ever hope to be complete without a full acquaintance with those letters and the great genius they reveal. Much has been written in later years which those letters correct and put into proper perspective. They show what his recent and latest biographer, Edgar Johnson, has called his " fantastic vitality, his inordinate vitality." But they show, as nothing else can show, the intensity of the flame of genius that burned in Charles Dickens and that was displayed in all that great outpouring of his works that we know.

And those letters also, I think, indicate that among the contemporaries of Charles Dickens his reforming zeal was rather overlooked, and it was overlooked primarily because of Dickens's own genius—the power with which he portrayed comedy and tragedy and all the elements which make up human life. But now, at this distance of time, a perusal of his letters indicates that there was a unifying thread that ran through the whole of that enormous career—the desire for social reform, that where injustice or wrong should rear its head he should there speak the effective words; and, of course, the pages of *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* show that while he was a great man of genius, a man who could use his imagination as no other novelist had used it before, nevertheless from the first faint beginnings of the *Sketches* right to the very end, this one thread—the reforming zeal—runs from start to finish.

So it was good to be reminded, as I have been reminded, of that earlier occasion.

Perhaps also you will allow me to say something of a rather more personal nature. In recent years, in the world of Dickens as we know it, I think we are all under the greatest debt to those brilliant performances of Mr. Emlyn Williams. One of the richest and most enjoyable evenings I ever spent was to picture in my

imagination, as I saw Emlyn Williams, the great figure of Charles Dickens and to reflect and to think that it was that very thing, the readings into which he threw that enormous vitality, that brought about that premature end. But at the same time, in these recent years, I think the contribution made by Mr. Emlyn Williams is one that all Dickens lovers should gratefully acknowledge.

There is something else that I want to mention—and I do it with a little more diffidence, because the person that I now want to say a word about is present in this room—my old friend Mr. Bransby Williams. Every Dickens lover is under a great debt to Mr. Bransby Williams, and I will confess that for my own part I never look upon his face but he brings to me recollections of *A Christmas Carol*, that book which, as you know, caused hundreds of people to write to Charles Dickens at the time to tell him that it was the greatest treasure that had come into the house and how it was on a shelf by itself and would be treasured all their life long. That book also brought what I think to be the most striking tribute from any man of letters to another, when the great Thackeray wrote to the great Dickens and said of *A Christmas Carol*, "This book seems to me to be a national benefit and to every man that reads it a personal kindness." When thoughts of that kind are brought into the mind by the figure and the presentations of Mr. Bransby Williams, I thought it right and proper, on an occasion of this kind, when we had the opportunity, that we should express our debt and our obligation to him.

In days now long past, it was the duty of any speaker presenting this great toast of the Immortal Memory to defend Charles Dickens from the assaults of the critics which were continually being made upon him. It is amusing and ironical now to think of it. You know how critics used to speak about his use of pathos, how he lacked sincerity, how his powers of observation were merely spontaneous and revealed no depth of expression, how his works were really inimitable caricatures of all the scenes of contemporary manners but they were not the masterpieces of the great observers of human nature—all that kind of criticism. A new kind of criticism, of course, arises in our own day; but all I would desire to say to you to-night is that judgment upon Charles Dickens is final and it has been passed—and it has been passed not by learned societies, not by literary critics; it has been passed by millions of people in every land, so that his fame, which grew from day to day during his life, now is upon a perfectly unassailable basis.

You will remember Forster's words—judges on the bench, boys in the street, those who were entering life and those who were quitting it, alike found the spell of Dickens irresistible. A venerable archdeacon, wrote Thomas Carlyle, after administering ghostly consolation to one whom he supposed to be sick and dying, and having finished his ministration was leaving the room, was astounded to hear the supposedly dying person say, "Well, thank God, Pickwick will be out in ten days." And that universal acclaim of Dickens which was so vividly portrayed by Forster is the same acclaim as is given to Dickens now wherever the English tongue is spoken.

Instead of defending Dickens, one now seeks to say just one word or two on an occasion of this kind about the great qualities which made him not merely the outstanding humorist and novelist of his day, but has made him a secure figure in our national life.

People naturally speak of his humour, his insight, his imagination, his powers of observation, his intensity of vision; and all these things together can make a great writer, but they do not explain, and cannot explain, the magical hold which Dickens had upon the people of his own day and the magical hold he still possesses over the people of every subsequent generation. The truth is that there was added to all that wonderful combination of qualities something more—a quality difficult to define, composed of a thousand ingredients, by some called genius, by some called the possession of the common touch; but whatever it was, there was something added to the sum total of every other quality which made him the great figure that he became.

And I, for my own part, am quite convinced that it was in a hard school that that quality came to him. That gift was bought with a promise and it was paid in a coinage that we do not know. I can never read what Dickens wrote in his mature years about his early days without a profound and moving sense of the deepest emotion. You will remember some of the things which he said: "It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me to think that after my descent into the poor little drudge that I became after we came to London that nobody had compassion enough upon me—a child, singularly bright, eager, quick, easily hurt both mentally and bodily—nobody had compassion enough upon me to say that something might be saved, as it might so easily have been saved, to send me to any common school." Or, again, you will remember that he wrote: "Here in Devonshire Terrace I sometimes forget that I have a dear wife and children, that I am acclaimed, and my mind goes wandering back over all those early years." And he said: "No words of mine can express the agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship, compared these every-day associates with the associates of my happier childhood and felt my hope of one day growing up to be a learned and distinguished man crushed in my breast. Oh, the misery it was to my young heart to believe that all that I had cared for, all that I had hoped for was leaving me, never to be brought back any more—that agony, I say, can never be written."

And that testimony from Dickens himself could be multiplied a hundredfold. But my own belief is that those experiences brought to Dickens something that he could never have obtained anywhere else. It was in that coinage that he paid for that very great gift.

In consequence, during those years, that marvellous power of observation was awake. Every place that he saw became his own; whether it was in the blacking factory (as one very acute observer once said, if Dickens was to whitewash the world, it was in the blacking factory that he learnt to do it), whether it was the attorney's office, whether it was in Doctors Commons, whether it

was in the rolling postchaise writing out his shorthand by the light of the lantern, whether it was in the Gallery of the House of Commons—that marvellous faculty of observation, that marvellous faculty of insight was steadily at work and all the places that he saw became his, so that in the fullness of time, when there came those great creations of his imagination, he peopled those places that he knew with great and immortal figures, so that men said: "This is not like life; this is life itself."

I think we do well, do we not, on an occasion when we honour the Immortal Memory, to remember the price which Dickens paid in order that he might be that benefactor of human kind of which I have spoken. The characters, of course, had this distinctive quality about them—they had become so real and so living that they are now a great part of our national life –Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Pecksniff, Sam Weller, David Copperfield, Mr. Micawber.

I also like to think that when he did create those characters, he portrayed in his own life that which he portrayed in his books. There is always in my mind what Dickens said about his first published piece of writing. You will remember how he told that he put it in a dark letter-box in a dark alley off Fleet Street, and when it appeared in all the glory of print bye the bye, "How well," said he, "I remember it; I walked down to Westminster Hall and turned into it for half an hour because my eyes were so dim with joy and pride that they could not bear the light, and indeed were not fit to be seen there."

That was the start, and then there was the great unfolding, with all the great and immortal works that we know, crowded by those great and real figures from his own imagination, so real that they form a national gallery and are more living than many people that we know, because into those characters Dickens put himself—he was, in truth, as his latest biographer says, a real Dickens character himself. There you will find, of course, all the infinite variety of human nature. In those great characters you will see the hopes and the fears, the smiles and the tears, the disappointments, the frustations and the heartbreaks—indeed, you will find all those things which form the sum of our own lives that we are compelled to live. In some degree every reader of Dickens sees himself and sees there portrayed the secrets of the innermost room; and because of the genius of Dickens he can be the great consoler, the great refiner, and the great enricher.

I must not take more of your time, and I will end. Dickens's latest biographer puts the sub-title to his book *Charles Dickens—His Tragedy and Triumph*. I always like to think of this great man that he was made of our common clay, that he knew the secrets of the human heart, that he suffered himself, and he was enabled to help others because of his insight and his wisdom.

"What seest thou in yonder human face,
Pale, frail and small?
I see a soul by tragedy worn thin,
I read a page of poetry and sin.
What seest thou?
I see a human face, pale, frail and small."

One man sees everything and another man sees nothing. And Dickens had the vision, the insight, to deal with all these matters with which we are concerned so that the affections now of the world are centred upon him, and his name will live so long as the language endures. In the Abbey, surrounded by the great triumvirate who moulded and formed the language that we speak, to that great language Charles Dickens added his imperishable name; and it is therefore entirely right and proper and fitting that we should to-day honour the Immortal Memory of Charles Dickens.

Mr. RICHARD DIMBLEBY, O.B.E., who supported the toast, said: I knew when I heard who was going to propose this great toast this evening that I was on a pretty sticky wicket. You know now just how sticky that wicket is. There is an old saying among the professionals of the stage—as my dear friend Bransby will bear me out—that you have to be awfully careful who you follow. I have picked badly to-night! If I ever heard a brilliant speech on the subject of Charles Dickens, I have just heard it.

But Sir Norman Birkett has one great advantage. He is himself quite obviously, as I expect are all of you, something of an expert on the subject of Dickens. Now I unfortunately, am not. I am simply a man who, as a youth, read *Oliver Twist*, and I have never been able to forget it since. Somehow it has always remained for me in everything that I have tried to do since, a sort of inspiration. I think that if one can be inspired now by what Dickens wrote, it does in a sense bear out what Sir Norman was saying about the imperishable nature of his words and his thoughts.

I feel that Dickens's power of reporting, if I may use such a mundane word for it—because I think that perhaps sums up what it really was—was certainly never excelled by anybody in his time, and has never been excelled since, nor do I think that it ever will be. In a very humble way I have always felt, deep down in me, a pride in the thought that I had a tiny affinity with him, because ever since I was a boy I have been reporting, too. Please do not make any mistake; I am not making any comparison; I only say that if you spend all your life trying to tell people about people, trying to describe events which play very heavily on people's emotions and on your own as you describe them, and then you read the works of Dickens, you can feel a peculiar something inside you which says that you are trying to look at things as he would have looked at them—and then you feel at the same time a sense of frustration and sometimes of despair, because you know you will never be able to do it really well, as he did. Nevertheless, I have always been proud of that slight connection which I preserve most jealously inside me.

It has been my job for 17 or 18 years now to serve, first, broadcasting and then television in this country, and in particular, perhaps, to see more than almost anyone else in that particular field of the great events of State and of the people and, above all, of the streets of London.

London Town, in particular as far as television is concerned, is

something with which my heart has been bound up for the last five or six years, and I have been amazed how continually, when moving and travelling about London, I have come face to face with Charles Dickens. It is not just that you come to places that you know are connected with him; but simply that as you walk about London in the ordinary way you are permanently in a world of Dickens, and it matters not that he wrote in the middle of the nineteenth century, for in the middle of the twentieth century everything seems just as true now as it did then.

If you walk along a street in London in the winter, when it is very cold and very dark and the lamps cast those little cold, yellow pools which they have been casting for a hundred years (and which they will never do any better, whether gas or electricity), when the fog that always seems to lie there deadens the sound of traffic until you might almost believe that it is the sounds of horses' hooves that you hear and not the sound of engines, when the shadowy shapes of people move away before you then you are face to face with Dickens all the time. The people that I have met in my travels about London, it does not matter whether they were rubicund, prosperous, successful and talkative businessmen in the City or whether dirty old bearded fellows who spend their lives in a hostel under Charing Cross Bridge they all come out of Dickens's books. Time and again, as I have been looking at some great event and looking at the hundreds of people before me, I have been able to pick one by one Dickens's own characters from those people.

If you want to be more precise—and perhaps you who study this subject more than I do are in the habit of being more precise about it—Sir Norman mentioned Devonshire Terrace. I can never pass Devonshire Terrace without seeing the pale face of David Copperfield at the window. If you go through Lincoln's Inn, or through the Temple, or through that little backwater that connects Fleet Street with the Temple, all the time, all around you, there are the memories and the ghosts, though they sometimes seem to be more real than ghosts, of Dickens.

I think that if I were asked to sum up the service that Dickens performed for us all, I would say that his greatest service was that he held to the face of his generation a clear and in some ways a merciless mirror, and if people did not like what they saw in it, that was just too bad; because he saw in everybody more than anybody else ever saw, and above all, what he saw was true. It may have been hidden from other people, but somehow he had that extraordinary gift for seeing the drama and the reality, the tragedy and the humour in every situation of life as it went by.

I found myself wondering the other day what Dickens would be doing if he were to live all over again to-day. The thought passed through my head (I hope it does not seem like blasphemy to you) that he could have performed an inestimable service to-day to that Aunt Sally of our generation, the B.B.C. What could he do, for example, with Mrs. Dale's Diary or The Archers—with their pale characters, devoid of blood? What would he do if he were given the task of providing the blood and thunder Saturday

night serial in the television service, watched and loved by so many people? Just think what he could do with it! Think of the characters that would appear on the screen—most of them played by Bransby Williams!

But it is true that a man who lived in the gaslight or the oil-light of a hundred years ago would fit into the picture of this generation to-day just as remarkably as he did then, and that the same gift for turning people inside out would still lie in his hands to-day as it did then.

I can only say that I have spent getting on for 20 years trying to find out how to convey to people descriptions of things which really have some colour and meaning and yet could not be written down but only spoken; and if at the end of my working days I thought that I had succeeded in doing one-thousandth part of what he did, I should pass on to meet him a very happy and proud man.

To have been asked to support this toast, though not to have been asked to follow Sir Norman Birkett, has been a very great honour of which my wife and I are very conscious, and I know she will join with me in thanking you very much for asking us to come this evening.

The toast of "Our Guests," was proposed by the veteran actor Mr. Bransby Williams, who was given a great ovation on rising to speak, and as he continued, the long years fell away and many of his hearers were carried back to days long ago when "Bransby" was doing his pioneering work of bringing Dickens to new and uncounted throngs in the Music Halls. It was both a moving and an exhilarating experience to hear him, as vigorous as ever, despite his eight-three years.

In proposing the toast "The Dickens Fellowship," Mr. Jack Simon, M.P., said that he thought it was suitable that a lawyer should be among those speaking—for the Fellowship had a great lawyer as its President, a great lawyer as its Vice-President, and of all the English novelists, Dickens had understood the law and lawyers and the ways of the court best.

Mr. W. MacQueen-Pope, in replying to the toast, said that the purpose of the Fellowship, its labour of love, was to see that nothing dimmed the lustre of that wonderful name and memory. They had the Immortal Memory—but how he wished at times that they had still got the man! Never had there been a time in the history of this country when Charles Dickens was more needed. He had championed the poor and he had been of the middle classes. To-day one might sometimes think that it was the middle classes that wanted a champion—and what a champion Charles Dickens would have been.

Mr. R. C. D. Shuckburgh, M.C., proposed the toast "The Chairman," and Sir Norman Birkett expressed his thanks.

CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS BROTHER FRED[1]

By Gerald G. Grubb
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FREDERICK WILLIAM DICKENS, eldest and probably last surviving brother of Charles Dickens, was born in 1820. When the second breaking-up of John Dickens's family occurred in 1834, Charles took Frederick, then about fourteen, to live with him in Furnival's Inn and "to instruct and provide for the best" he could.[2] During the next two years Frederick's name appears frequently in Charles's correspondence as a messenger, as an escort for Mary Hogarth, and as a stand-in for Charles with Catherine Hogarth when the former was unavoidably detained by his reportorial duties.[3]

By July, 1836, Charles felt that Frederick would be better off if he were put to some regular employment. Knowing that the boy had attracted the favorable attention of John Macrone, the publisher of *Sketches by Boz* in collected form, Charles succeeded in placing him in Macrone's counting-house,[4] but continued giving him a home and supervising his social life and studies.[5]

Even if Frederick's employment survived Dickens's quarrel with Macrone, the publisher's death in 1837, and the liquidation of his business, left Frederick without a position. Then in 1838, Dickens made successful application to Lord Stanley for a Treasury-clerkship for his brother.[6] Later in that year, Dickens wrote Mitton that "Stanley sent for Fred to the Treasury this morning, and appointed him to the Secretary's Office in the Custom House" which he characterised as a "much better place."[7] When Dickens moved his parents and youngest brother to Alpington in 1839, he wrote Forster that "Some *present* arrangement for Frederick must be contrived in my absence."[8]

For many years there existed a genuine comradeship between Charles and Frederick. They shared in common a spirit of adventure, touched with exuberance. Frederick's visit to Broadstairs in September, 1839, was of enough importance to merit four references in Dickens's diary.[9] When Forster tells of Dickens braving the storm at Broadstairs to watch the tormented sea, he deletes that portion of his friend's letter which includes Fred in his adventure.[10] This close association continued through 1840, and when Dickens was out of town, he encouraged his friends by post to continue their visits to Devonshire Terrace, informing them that Frederick lived there and had the "keys to the cellar."[11]

[1] The writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance of a Carnegie Grant-in-Aid in the preparation of this study.

[2] *Nonesuch Letters*, I, 35, 11/29/34.
[3] *Mr. and Mrs. Dickens*, *passim*.
[4] *Letters*, I, 73.
[5] *Ibid.*, I, 73-74.
[6] Forster, *Life of Dickens*, Ley edn., p. 131.
[7] *Letters*, I, 52.
[8] *Ibid.*, I, 202, *ca.* 3/1/39.
[9] *Ibid.*, I, 193-194, September 13, 20, 23, 25.
[10] Dickens wrote, "Fred (who is here) and I staggered down . . ." etc., ALS., 9/19/39, quoted by permission of Mr. Henry Charles Dickens, O.B.E., and the authorities of the Victoria and Albert Museum Library. Cf. Forster's *Life*, p. 126.
[11] *Letters*, I, 331.

After Frederick had held his clerkship in the Treasury about three years, the question of his promotion came up. Dickens was anxious for his advancement, but he felt that he could not " possibly apply to the Tories for *anything*." He advised Frederick to seek the counsel of his immediate superior, a Mr. Archer; and if they concurred in the opinion that it would not be improper to memorialise the Lords of the Treasury, he said, " I will draw a memorial for you."[1] Mr. Archer and Frederick concurred, Dickens wrote the memorial, and Frederick circulated it; but not without alterations. Dickens did not think the young man had improved its composition or meaning; but he said, " I shall be very anxious to hear your further news."[2] Soon thereafter, to Mitton Dickens happily announced: " Fred will have his promotion this week. I am as glad of it, as though anyone had given me five hundred pounds."[3]

Further evidence of the esteem in which Dickens and his wife held Frederick before their trip to America appears in Dickens's words to Forster relative to a caretaker for Devonshire Terrace, " Kate . . . is satisfied to have nobody in the house but Fred, of whom you know, they are all fond."[4] In two letters to Macready, Dickens strengthened his testimony to the family regard for Frederick. Speaking of Mrs. Dickens's despondency at the thought of separation from her children, he wrote, " She has been much comforted by a stout note from Fred, who is to stay with the children." Less than a month before sailing, Dickens wrote Macready, " Will you allow my brother Fred, to represent me in my free admission [to Drury Lane], while I am away? He is a very good fellow, and I shall be glad to give him that great pleasure, and keep him out of harm's way at the same time."[5]

While the Dickenses were in America, they both wrote long and intimate letters to Frederick, three of which are now in the Berg Collection of The New York Public Library, and are summarised here by permission of the authorities of that library. From Boston, Mrs. Dickens wrote a four-page letter on January 30, 1842, to which Dickens added a postcript, dealing largely with the passage from England. From Baltimore, on March 22, Dickens wrote to Frederick at length about the voyage over, his American Secretary, G. W. Putnam, his visit to Richmond in slavery country, and his remaining itinerary. Mrs. Dickens's postscript adds to our knowledge of her esteem of Frederick. The third Berg letter was written by Dickens from Cincinnati on April 4, describing his travels on the Ohio and the Mississippi, and inquiring about people and things at home. Again, Mrs. Dickens added a friendly postscript.

After Dickens returned to England, Frederick conceived the notion that he was not welcome at Devonshire Terrace. Seeking to allay Frederick's misgivings on that point, Dickens invited him to a dinner in the country at which he was about to entertain

[1] *Letters*, I, 350, 9/12/41.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 353, 1/19/41.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, 354, 9/22/41. Cf. *Ibid.*, I, 355.
[4] *Ibid.*, I, 355.
[5] ALS., 9/29/41, and ALS., 12/7/41, Dickens to W. C. Macready, now in The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City. These quotations and all others herein from unpublished Dickens letters in the Morgan Library are made with the permission of the authorities of that library.

Mitton, and declared he would be waiting in his carriage for him at the " Treasury door " at half-past twelve.[1] That was in May, 1843; and in the following September, Dickens sent money to Frederick while the latter was visiting at Easthorpe, the Yorkshire residence of the Smithsons's, including Alfred Dickens's future wife.[2]

Dickens, while living in Italy in 1844, invited Frederick to visit him there, offering to pay £10 of the £30 that the trip would cost, and commissioned him to receive the manuscript of the last two numbers of *Chuzzlewit* from Mitton for delivery to Forster.[3] He met Frederick at Marseilles on September 7; and it was on this trip that the latter almost lost his life by drowning while in swimming at Albaro, Italy, an incident Dickens described as " . . . a world of horror and anguish, crowded into four or five minutes of dreadful agitation . . ."[4]

In the early months of 1844, a series of events began taking place that were destined, indirectly at least, to bring about the first serious disagreement between Charles and Frederick. Dickens presided at a soiree at the Liverpool Mechanics' Institute where he met the pianist, Miss Christiana Weller, and her family. Later, he followed the courtship of Miss Weller and his friend T. J. Thompson, writing letters to both and having interviews with Thompson. Frederick was present at one of these interviews.[5] When Miss Weller made her London debut, she was accompanied by her younger sister, Anna Weller. Dickens and his wife were concerned with their entertainment. It is probable that Frederick met Anna about June 10, 1844.[6] At any rate they soon entered into a courtship that did not meet the approval of the girl's father, and which had many ramifications, touching several families.

A related incident occurred in September of 1846, which betrayed Frederick's lack of social refinement and ordinary sensibilities of a gentleman. Alfred Dickens had married the daughter of Mrs. Smithson, who was, in turn, the sister of T. J. Thompson, husband of Christiana Weller. Augustus Dickens, youngest brother of Charles and Frederick, had taken up what Dickens called his " absurd position in Mrs. Smithson's house." When a family quarrel developed, Dickens wrote to their father about Augustus and intrusted the letter to Frederick for safe delivery. Frederick copied portions of it and sent them to Thompson. He, in turn, called Dickens's attention to Frederick's breach of decorum. Dickens, of course, took Frederick to task, and, at the same time, he cautioned him about taking any kind of advice from Mr. Weller. Yet, he closed his letter in a friendly vein, reminding Frederick of the latter's promised visit to Lausanne.[7]

In the meantime, the Anna-Frederick courtship was spreading dissatisfaction and misunderstanding throughout two families. From Paris, on January 28, 1847, Dickens wrote Frederick

[1] *Letters*, I, 517, 5/2/43.
[2] *Ibid.*, I, 538.
[3] ALS., Dickens to F. W. Dickens, 7/22/44, now in the Berg Collection of The New York Public Library, and summarised here by permission of the authorities of that library.
[4] Forster, *Life*, pp. 342-343.
[5] ALS., Dickens to T. J. Thompson, in the Berg Collection New York Public Library, and mentioned by permission.
[6] *Letters*, I, 600, 601, 605, and especially 607.
[7] *Ibid.*, I, 788-789.

pleading for a postponement of the marriage for two years and offering to mediate with Mr. Weller for an understanding on that condition.[1] He agreed with Weller's contention that Frederick did not have the means of supporting a wife and rearing a family.[2] When Weller and his son-in-law, a Mr. Shaw, showed some inclination toward reconciliation, Frederick seems to have met them with reservations. On February 12, Dickens warned his brother that all imperfect reconciliations are bad. He urged him toward complete reconciliation based upon a recognition that Mr. Weller had right and commonsense on his side. Above all, he and Anna must have no secrets from Mr. Weller: that seems to have been " . . . the sorest of his itching points."[3] Frederick sulked for about eight months before he wrote to Dickens again. In reply on October 4, Dickens warned him to be certain that opposition had not colored both his affections and his judgment, and asked him to recognise that " . . . there is an 'impracticability' in that blood which cannot be reconciled with happiness," that by false education and weak parents " a character has been made . . . which can never come right."[4] Almost another year passed; then Dickens received a letter apparently from the Wellers and another one from Frederick; so, on September 3, 1848, he urged anew all of his reasons for a postponement of the marriage which Frederick had now fully determined upon. Since this letter marked another step in the estrangement of the brothers, we must examine closely its last paragraph. Dickens had just learned that Frederick was badly in debt, and he was shocked that anyone could contemplate marriage in the face of unsatisfied creditors. With intense feeling, he wrote:

> "whenever I have thought that you owed money, I have supposed that you were gradually paying it . . . When I wrote from Paris, this was my belief, and I thought that if I could assist you by furnishing your house or lodgings . . . I should be justified in such an outlay. But whether I can reconcile it with the remembrance of my children . . . to fling any sum of money into . . . such a marriage . . . is a grave question . . . I cannot possibly enter into now, unless I have the means before me, in writings, of ascertaining what your liabilities are, and what your exact position is.[5]

For a season Frederick was vexed with his brother because of that one's strong stand, but that did not alter the latter's opinion;[6] and when the marriage was finally celebrated, Dickens and his wife made an effort to continue with Frederick on the old footing of affectionate friendship. Soon Dickens was granting him interviews, sending his love to Anna, and promising a visit from Kate.[7] On August 31, 1850, Dickens was expecting Frederick to visit his home;[8] and by September 26, Frederick was asking Charles to become his endorser, which he declined to do because

[1] *Letters*, II, 7-9.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, 11-12.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, 14.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, 55-56.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, 117-118.
[6] *Ibid.*, II, 121, 9/21/48.
[7] *Ibid.*, II, 204-205, 2/7/50.
[8] *Ibid.*, II, 230.

of the extent of the obligation, although he said, "It gives me extraordinary pain to refuse you anything . . ."[1] Yet, on November 28, Dickens returned to the subject, inquiring, "What is the nature of the Security that I should be required to give to Mr. Manning . . . What the instrument and what its provisions?"[2]

For a time between 1845 and 1850, Dickens and Frederick were held together by their common interest in amateur theatricals. Frederick was a member of that famous company of amateurs who presented on several occasions *Every Man in His Humour*, and while the play was in rehearsal for its first performance, Dickens gave Frederick special aid in the mastery of his part.[3] Since the cost of the production of this play in Miss Fanny Kelley's theatre on September 2, 1845, when Frederick played the rôle of Young Knowell, was £10 4*s*. 0*d*. for each of the actors, one wonders if Frederick bore his share, or if it fell upon the shoulders of Charles.[4] According to the playbills, Frederick appeared as Edward Knowell at St. James's Theatre on November 15, 1845. Dickens assured George Cattermole, who had undertaken on short notice to play the part of Wellbred, that he would call in Frederick[5] to dine with him and to exercise Cattermole in his part.[6] Frederick was still with the amateurs in 1847 when they performed Jonson's comedy in Liverpool and in Manchester. At the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on May 17, 1848, he played the rôle of Edward Knowell; and in the farce that followed it, *Love, Law, and Physic*, he played the part of Captain Danvers, while Dickens played Flexible.

It seems that Frederick's last association with Dickens's amateurs was in the performance of *Every Man in His Humour* at Knebsworth, country seat of Bulwer-Lytton. In passing Sir Edward's invitation on to Frederick, Dickens said, "Your charges, of course, are my concern."[7] It is not easy to understand just what this means. Regardless of their personal relations in 1850, Dickens must have looked upon his brother as an amateur actor of some ability; for in the Knebsworth performances he promoted him to the difficult rôle of Cash.[8] Thereafter, Frederick's name disappears from the playbills. The reason is not clear, but may have had some relation to Dickens's reference to Frederick's charges, which he himself would pay. That leads one to suspect that Frederick either put a price upon his services or that he found it too burdensome to pay his own expenses while playing with the amateurs.

In spite of Dickens's request of August, 1848, that, during his absence for the remainder of the summer, Frederick should stop at Devonshire Terrace and answer the begging letters,[9] of Frederick's birthday note of February, 1849, of Dickens's friendly note, and of his regret for neglecting to send Frederick a copy of

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 237.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, 247.
[3] *Ibid.*, I, 700.
[4] *Ibid.*, I, 705.
[5] *Ibid.*, I, 717, 11/6/45.
[6] *Ibid.*, II, 84. Dexter dates this note "Saturday [April, 1848]"; but it cannot belong to 1848, for in the performance of Jonson's comedy on May 17, 1848, George Henry Lewes played the part of Wellbred. See a facsimile of the playbill in Pemberton's *Dickens and the Stage*, p. 101. The note was written on September 8, 1845.
[7] *Letters*, II, 237, 9/26/50.
[8] *Ibid.*, II, 240, 10/21/50.
[9] *Ibid.*, II, 116.

The Haunted Man,[1] it is evident that their personal relations steadily deteriorated after 1848. By 1854, Dickens was so out of touch with his brother that on April 4, he and Wills were asking Mark Lemon for information about him.[2]

On December 12, Dickens wrote Frederick that his recent request for financial aid made it necessary for him to "write a very plain answer," in which he also said:

> "I have already done more for you than most dispassionate persons would consider right or reasonable in itself. But, considered with any fair reference to the great expenses I have sustained for other relatives, it becomes little else than monstrous. The possibility of your having any further expenses from me, is absolutely and finally past."[3]

Frederick then turned to Wills and Henry Austin, whom Dickens strongly warned against involving themselves; nevertheless, they became Frederick's guarantors. About two years later, and before replying to still another of the latter's requests for an interview, Dickens asked Wills the state of his transaction in Frederick's favor.[4] Then Dickens wrote on January 8, 1857: "He told me how it stood, and I found you have deserted him and Henry, with greater coolness than I had been prepared for."[5] He declared that he had interfered in no way with any action that Wills might deem it necessary to enter into for his own protection. "I must decline," he said, "entering on the subject any further, and therefore make no appointment."

Less than a month later he again approached Dickens, this time for a loan, whose reply of February 5, 1857, was almost brutally factual. "I am sorry," he said, "to be obliged to reply to you as before. I cannot lend you £30 . . . because I cannot trust you, and because your bad faith with Wills and Austin makes the word 'lend' an absurdity."[6] After this rebuff, contact between the brothers became less and less frequent. In the late summer of 1858, Frederick paid Dickens a surprise visit at Morrison's Hotel in Dublin; and the latter wrote Georgina Hogarth, "I was dreadfully hard on him at first, but relented."[7] The very last published note that we have of Dickens to Frederick was written about two months later when he promised him an interview at Gad's Hill on October 31.[8]

At this point the unpublished letters of Dickens to T. J. Thompson, owned by the Pierpont Morgan Library, throw further light on the life and affairs of Frederick. The hitherto published correspondence of Dickens with Thompson comes to an end as of October 12, 1847,[9] and Dickens last reference to Thompson hitherto printed appears in a letter to Mrs. Dickens, dated October 8, 1853.[10] I am indebted to the authorities of the Morgan Library for the privilege of quoting from the letters which Dickens wrote

[1] *Letters*, II, 145.
[2] *Ibid.*, II, 548.
[3] *Ibid.*, II, 815.
[4] *Ibid.*, II, 824.
[5] *Ibid.*, II, 824.
[6] *Ibid.*, II, 833.
[7] *Ibid.*, III, 49, 8/29/58.
[8] *Ibid.*, III, 64, 10/19/58.
[9] *Ibid.*, II, 55.
[10] *Ibid.*, II, 503-504; also, *Mr. and Mrs. Dickens*, p. 196.

to Thompson between 1858 and 1861, touching the affairs of Frederick.

Sometime prior to October 27, 1858, Frederick had separated from his wife, and Thompson had offered himself as a mediator who, by virtue of his marital connection with the Weller family and his long-standing friendships with the Dickens family, was in a position to advise to the advantage of all parties. His services had been rejected. Thereupon, Thompson wrote to Dickens, thinking that he would be well acquainted with his brother's affairs.

Dickens replied on October 27, 1858, saying that he knew nothing of Frederick's relations with his wife and her family, and that for some years prior to the latter's unexpected visit to his room in the Morrison Hotel in Dublin, he had been out of touch with him. Dickens said that he was not in a position to form a judgment upon Frederick and his wife, but he did not doubt that Thompson would have made a very discreet and considerate mediator.

On receipt of a second letter from Thompson, Dickens wrote to Frederick on November 8, 1858, and invited him to Tavistock House. There he tactfully let Frederick know that he had heard of his domestic troubles and suggested Thompson as the logical mediator. Dickens made it plain that he knew nothing of the differences between Frederick and his wife and her family, and wanted to know nothing. He confined himself to the fact that Frederick had made her no allowance. He was very emphatic upon that point. However, he felt that his presentation of the case had produced no effect upon him, for in parting Frederick had indicated that such was the case.[1]

On November 21st, Frederick visited Dickens again, and much to the latter's surprise, stated that he had reconsidered and was then ready to make any reasonable settlement with his wife. With Frederick's authorisation, Dickens proposed that Thompson use his influence in stopping the legal proceedings, to determine what Anna Weller Dickens thought her husband ought to allow her, and what he was actually able to allow her.[2]

Something more than a month passed before Dickens wrote again to Thompson; and, in the meantime, that gentleman became suspicious that Dickens had lost his interest in the case. Dickens, according to his reply to Thompson's third letter, had been delaying in order to hear from Frederick, who, for an entire month, in the midst of important negotiations, had held himself aloof. On the very morning of the arrival of Thompson's letter, Dickens had a discouraging note from Frederick, which must have dealt with the latter's financial entanglements, for he sent it on to Thompson, saying, " Judge what it is possible to do, under such circumstances."[3]

By January, 1859, the prospect of bringing about a settlement between Frederick and his wife became very remote. Apparently, Thompson had proposed that Frederick should make her an

[1] ALS., Dickens to Thompson, 11/8/58, in Morgan Library. Dickens himself had just separated from his wife to whom he had made a very liberal allowance.
[2] ALS., Dickens to Thompson, 11/22/58, in Morgan Library.
[3] ALS., Dickens to Thompson, 12/27/58, in Morgan Library.

annual allowance and that he should take out life insurance in her favor. Dickens agreed with him about the allowance, but did not believe that Frederick was financially able to carry insurance. Also, it now appears that Anna's father was representing her interest, that he would make no proposal for a settlement, and that Frederick was equally stubborn. Dickens warned Thompson that any proposal that they as disinterested friends might make would be twisted by Weller into a concession by Frederick; and they, in that case, would have to make personal denial of Weller's claim in the witness box. He concluded: "They must go on. We can do nothing."[1]

Nearly three years had passed when just prior to October 27, 1861, Thompson wrote Dickens asking him to use his influence with Frederick and suggesting that his conduct would bring a "painful sort of publicity" upon Dickens's name. That letter called forth what seems to have been the last word written between them on the topic which Dickens called a "miserable subject." Dickens's reply was something in the nature of a recapitulation of his lifetime of dealing with his brother. He told Thompson that he had no more influence over Frederick than he or Weller had, that Frederick showed his utter disregard for his name when he compromised Wills for a large sum of money and then treated him with the utmost contempt. He said that no sort of painful publicity could alter the fact that he no longer had any sort of influence over Frederick's actions; that he had no doubt that Frederick "humiliates himself and degrades himself"; that he could not remain unmoved by the ruin of a relative for whom he had done more than he could ever expect to do for each of his "own seven boys." Nevertheless, Dickens believed that his own honor was in his own keeping, and that nothing Frederick might do could change that; so he assured Thompson that the latter's fear that Frederick might disgrace his novelist brother was founded upon a false premise."[2]

From this point in time, this sad story of estrangement draws rapidly to a close. Dickens wrote Georgina Hogarth on November 7, 1861, that Frederick had appeared at Canterbury during one of his readings as "Mr. Dickens's brother to pass in Dr. Sankey," and went away without entering the hall, leaving him to wonder about the identity of Dr. Sankey.[3] Nearly four years passed before Frederick's name appears again in Dickens's published correspondence; then, on February 15, 1865, Dickens wrote briefly and simply, "I have written Frederick, and earnestly hope he is doing well."[4]

Frederick William Dickens died unexpectedly on October 20, 1868, at the age of 48, in Darlington, "from asphyxia, following the bursting of an abscess in his right lung."[5] George Dolby tells how the news first reached him, how he carried it to his Chief, how Dickens was affected by the loss of his brother, and how he sent

[1] ALS., Dickens to Thompson, 1/6/59, in Morgan Library.
[2] ALS., Dickens to Thompson, 10/27/61, in Morgan Library.
[3] *Letters*, III, 252.
[4] *Ibid.*, III, 415.
[5] See T. P. Cooper, "Frederick William Dickens, Dickens's Last Surviving Brother," *The Dickensian*, XXIV (June, 1928), 190-191, and J. W. T. Ley's note in his edition of Forster's *Life of Dickens*, p. 806.

him to Darlington to inquire into the particulars of Frederick's last illness; and how he learned that the deceased had been carefully tended in his last hours by the friends with whom he had been staying.[1] Three days after Frederick's death, that is, on October 23, 1868, Dickens answered a touching letter from Dr. Howison, the physician who attended Frederick in his last hours. This letter reveals Dickens's final attitude toward his dead brother and hints of the part he took in providing a decent funeral for him. He wrote:

> " Passing through London today on my way from Brighton to Manchester, I find your touching letter. I hasten to assure you that I am truly grateful for your care of my late brother, and that I am thoroughly certain he could not have been in kinder or nobler hands. In reference to the estrangement between him and me, I am glad to remember that it never involved on my side, the slightest feeling of anger. He lost opportunities that I had put in his way, poor dear fellow, but there were unhappy circumstances in his life which demanded great allowances. I do not recollect, thank God, that a hard word was passed between us.
>
> You will, no doubt, have seen and been consulted by my eldest son. I instructed him to see you as soon as he possibly could, after his arrival in Darlington. I may assume that he guided himself by your advice in preparing for the funeral, and that he has told you how strictly I charged him to thank those who had been kind to Frederick. As I have already written, I am truly grateful to you in remembrance of him, and I heartily thank you. How tenderly I write these words you can scarcely imagine, unless you know that he was my favourite when he was a child, and that I was his tutor when he was a boy." [2]

Thus, in a matter of hours after Dickens learned of the passing of his nearest brother, the faults and failures of that brother's adult life have faded into the twilight and his childhood and promising youth have become to Dickens the great reality. Fittingly, he wrote to Forster on October 24, 1868: " It was a wasted life, but God forbid that one should be hard upon it, or upon anything in this world that is not deliberately and coldly wrong . . ."[3]

[1] *Charles Dickens as I Knew Him* (New York: Scribner's, 1912), p. 346.
[2] *Letters*, III, 674-675.
[3] *Ibid.*, III, 675.

RECENT DICKENSIANA

Miss Burdett-Coutts : Some Misconceptions.
K. J. Fielding. *19th Century Fiction*, March.

A Dickens Dinner Party. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Manchester, Sept., 1953.

SHAVINGS FROM DICKENS'S WORKSHOP

Unpublished Fragments from the Novels

IV. *THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP*

(continued)

IN the following pages will be found those passages of *The Old Curiosity Shop* deleted by the author in making up the weekly parts of *Master Humphrey's Clock* in which the novel appeared. They are taken from Dickens's original corrected proofs, and published for the first time,[1] by permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum.—EDITOR.

SAMPSON IS ALARMED

[Ch. LIX. Kit finds Brass looking so strange that he enquired if anything was the matter. "You are so very pale," said Kit,—]

"Pale!" cried Brass rubbing his face with both hands, and pushing his hair up on end. "Fancy, Kit, fancy. Ha ha! Why how you stare!"

"Really you look so altered (that I should hardly . . .

SAMPSON WAXES POETICAL

[Ch. LIX. Brass assures Kit that "A poor widow struggling to maintain her orphans in decency and comfort, is a delicious picture of human goodness."—]

It comes upon us who are in the law, Kit, like a refreshing breeze mixing up violets and all that sort of thing with the fogs we live in and—but I'm rather wandering from the point—

A TRIBUTE TO A SISTER

[Ch. LIX. A bank note is found in Kit's hat. Says Brass, "This is human natur, is it? Oh natur, natur!"—]

This is the miscreant on whose account I've quarrelled with a sister, the tenderest in her affections and the toughest in her knowledge of business, that ever bloomed and blowed!

SAMPSON'S OUTRAGED DIGNITY

[Ch. LX. Mr. Witherden informs Brass that Mr. Chuckster will deal with his requirements, but is met with lengthy protests. "Well, will you have the goodness to state your business then, Mr. Brass?" said the notary."—]

"There again, gentlemen, there again I am wronged. I come here," said Brass, putting his hat upon a stool, and making motions with both his hands as if he were wringing them dry, "with no personal con-siderations whatever. I came here with

[1] A passage from Ch. LXVI, about the parentage of the Marchioness appeared in "Dickens's Marchioness Identified," by Gerald G. Grubb, in *Modern Language Notes*, LXVIII, March 1953.

no client's interest in view, with no interests of my own in view. I came here for no profit and no gain."

"Will you be kind enough to say what you do come for?" demanded the notary.

A Family Likeness

[Ch. LX. Brass exclaims, on being assured that both Mr. Witherden's visitors bear the name of Garland, adding, "But I might have known that from the uncommon likeness."—]

"Mr. Richard sir, do you observe the nose? If you stood exactly where I am Sarah my dear, and could catch the whole expression of the chin—"

"Oh Mr. Brass, pray proceed with what you were about to say" interrupted the notary.

When Justice Miscarries

[Ch. LXI. The chapter opens with a paragraph on the reflections of the falsely accused. The following was to have formed a second paragraph on the same theme, apropos of the false accusation of Kit.—]

There was—and may be now—a custom extant in England, of waving flags with certain honourable ceremonies above the graves of those who had been wrongfully put to death by the law, being believed to be guilty, but whose innocence had been afterwards established. How many of these banners has society waved, in a mockery of reparation, above the graves of its greatest ornaments and benefactors, whose term of life its own injustice has abridged!

Sampson at the Wharf

[Ch. LXII. Brass visits Quilp at the wharf, and wishes he had Sally's protection, "looking doubtfully towards the light and over his shoulder."—]

"It is so cursed lonely—so dreary and so dark," he said with a look of extreme distaste! "So out of hearing too! Suppose it was necessary to scream for help here, who would come to one's assistance? If anybody heard one, it would only be some coal-whipper or ballast-heaver, and much he'd care. He'd howl back again and there would be an end of it. These wretched old shells of houses and rotten places that are scattered about these banks" —muttered Brass, looking pettishly round—what's the use of them, except to make men uncomfortable, and furnish opportunities for secret murders and buryings? Ugh! I never go down the river or along shore on either side, but I believe Quilp must have built 'em every one."

Again Sampson Brass turned his eyes distrustfully towards the light in the window, and hesitated.

"A Tempting Spot"

[Ch. LXII. Quilp listens to Brass stumbling on his way out from the wharf, until "he got quit of the place, and was out of hearing."—]

"Humph!" said the dwarf, looking round, "Gloomy and dark! If I took it in my head to be a widower now, I need only invite Mrs. Quilp to take tea here one foggy night—the water's very near the door to be sure. If she took the wrong turning and her foot slipped—ah!"

He stood musing for a minute or two on the very brink of the wharf, holding the lantern so that its light was reflected downwards on the water, and resting one foot upon a great iron ring, sunk into the coping.

"Yes," said Quilp, knocking this ring with his heel, "it's a tempting spot. If anybody I hate, had fallen over, and was hanging by one hand to this, and screaming to me while I sat and smoked in Bachelor's Hall there, how very deaf I should be! I should hear the splash that followed though, for all that. Ha, ha, ha!—I think I should hear the splash."

He walked away from it three or four times, and as often walked back to take another look. At last he shut himself up again, and sprung once more into his hammock.

How to Treat a Pony

[Ch. LXV. The hostler finds the pony to be "the most wicious rascal," "'He'll never stand still, if you call him names,' said Mr. Abel," –]

"Mind that—you must coax him."

"Coax him!" grumbled the man. "He wants a little coaxing with a heavier whip, that's what he wants, sir."

"Not on any account" said Mr. Abel (getting in . . .

Mr. Abel is Taken by Surprise

[Ch. LXV. Mr. Abel, driving away, exclaims to find the Marchioness behind him."—]

It was not an unnatural exclamation; for the Marchioness had a very dirty face from wiping away her tears with muddy hands, and her appearance in every sense of the word was startling.

"God bless me!" cried Mr. Abel, "What is this?"

Mr. Abel Fears a Trap

[Ch. LXV. Mr. Abel is conducted by the Marchioness to the sick bed of Dick Swiveller, but before recognising him is very apprehensive, and "kept a long way from the bed and very near the door."—]

thinking it just possible that the seeming sleeper might be some strong man, very wide awake, who, on being decoyed close to the bedside would start up and summarily throttle him.

[Ch. LXVI. When Brass is finally brought to book, Sally's disquietude took the form of her pacing the room with manly strides. Sometimes " she stopped to pull out her snuff-box and bite the lid."—]

Gradually drawing in these walks, nearer and nearer Sampson, she suddenly gave vent to the emotions that stirred within her by twisting her right hand in his more than auburn locks, and shaking him desperately.

" Help, help ! " cried Brass. " Gentlemen, I must be protected from personal violence. This fellow will be the death of me."

" Look at me," said Sally. " Look at me and tell me what do you say of the first cause of all this—of that false and treacherous little serpent, eh ? "

" Curse and confound her," returned Brass between his teeth. " I wish I had her here, that's all."

" *You* wish you had her here ! " retorted Sally. " What do *I* wish, do you think ? "

" Much the same, I suppose," said Sampson coolly. " It's not worse for you than for me."

Miss Sally folded her arms, and pressing her lips close together, and swaying herself from side to side, looked steadfastly at her brother.

" It's no worse ! " she said. " No worse for the artful wretch to be the ruin of her own mother ! "

Mr. Brass looked round the room, and under the tables, as if for the parent in question; and again raised his eyes to his sister's face.

" Is it no worse, I ask you," repeated Sarah, " for her to be my ruin than yours ? "

" Gentlemen," said Brass, turning pale, " there's a little distraction going on here. You had better put that tray of forks out of the way and take particular care of your penknives if you please."

Miss Brass smiled loftily at these fears, and folding her arms a little tighter, replied,

" I am her mother. She is my child. There. Now what do you say ? "

" Why, I say " said Brass, falling back in his chair, " don't talk nonsense. Your child ? I don't believe such a thing's possible. I am sure it isn't. It couldn't be. I'd sooner believe –Mrs. Southcote and *her* child. Non-sense ! "

Giving utterance to this last word in a loud tone and with strong emphasis, Sampson bent over his writing again, and shook his head until he could shake it no longer.

The beautiful vision said no more, but resumed her walking up and down the room, in perfect indifference to all that passed, and even to her brother's troubled state of mind regarding herself and her late disclosure, which vented itself all that day in the constant utterance of such phrases as " I'll never believe it possible ! — It couldn't be—Don't tell me—Non-sense ! " and the like, which he

repeated sometimes over and over again in a paroxysm of several minutes' duration, and sometimes singly, and at long intervals; but always with uncommon vehemence. Of none of these expressions of wonder and incredulity, nor of the evident surprise and consternation of the three gentlemen, did Miss Brass take the slightest heed.

Tom Scott and Punch

[Ch. LXVII. Quilp, who was not to see another day dawn, "brewed a great bowl of hot punch, lighted his pipe, and sat down to spend the evening."—]

"Do you like punch, you dog? said the dwarf, stirring it up, and eyeing his attendant.

"No," replied Tom Scott.

"You lie, you dog; you do."

"I don't," roared Tom.

"Then you shall drink a pint," replied Quilp, smacking his lips.

"Come, you let me alone," said Tom," and don't let's have any of your nonsense."

"Drink it every drop, you dog," returned his master, filling a pint pot to the brim and handing it to him; "or I'll pour boiling water down your throat, and try if you like that better."

The truth is, that the boy was very fond of punch, but that he knew his master much too well to say so. Therefore he took care to drink it with many wry faces, and strong expressions of dislike, which at once delighted Quilp extremely, and filled the lad himself with a secret joy, so that both parties were well satisfied.

LITTLE DORRIT, ON AND OFF

By Malcolm Morley

THE least dramatised of all the novels of Charles Dickens is *Little Dorrit*. There has been no adaptation of any importance produced in London; or, for that matter, in the English theatre. The stray attempts at putting its characters behind the footlights have invariably resulted in failure both here and in America. More success has been achieved, however, on the Continent and particularly in Russia.

Published in monthly numbers from December 1855 to June 1857, the story did not greatly inspire play-hacks of the period to manufacture dramas from it. It did not appear to furnish good material for stage consumption. In London a lone adaptation *Little Dorrit* was given at the Strand Theatre on November 10th, 1856, seven months before the serial numbers ended. Clumsily contrived by F. Fox Cooper, the piece only endured for some seventeen performances. No acknowledgement of his work was

made by the playwright. He virtually disowned the adaptation which seems never to have been seen in the theatre since. According to the Diary of the sedulous E. L. Blanchard, who attended on the fourth night, the play was long and slow. In the three acts there were thirteen changes of scenery. What a busy time the stage hands must have had. Dickens's trenchant satire about the Circumlocution Office, his criticism of the legal roundabout, made memorable reading but in being transplanted from the book to the stage much of its effect was lost. Long speech after long speech caused the action to drag. The narrative, too, was twisted and truncated in order to wind up the story regardless of the climax that Dickens was to provide in due course. The cast consisted of the Strand regulars, foremost honours going to John Clarke for his " steaming, snorting, rent-collector Pancks " as his performance was described in the Era. Clarke was a young English actor beginning to gain a reputation for character work. He had been seen as Kit Cobs and later was to enact other rôles from Dickens; Tilly Slowboy, Sairey Gamp, Quilp and Squeers. Among the many mistakes in that misleading publication *Dickens the Dramatist* is the hopeless confusion of this actor with John Sleeper Clarke, the famous American comedian and brother-in-law of Edwin Booth. To return to the bill of the play: Mr. Dorrit was played by John Neville (father of the better-known Henry Neville), Little Dorrit by Emma Wilton, Maggie by Miss Cuthbert, Arthur Clennam by John Howard, Barnacle Junior by J. Kinloch and Tite Barnacle by William Robertson, at one time notable in theatreland as the proprietor of the Lincoln Circuit.

No other Dorrit dramatisation has been given in the West End but an item of curiosity is a printed play which claims to be the text of one represented in the metropolis. It is a shockingly bad play taken from the novel by an unrecorded dramatist and published at one penny by C. Purkess of Compton Street in a series labelled the Library of Romance. Undated though the publication is, an easy surmise would place it about the time of the Strand production or a little later. The front page is decorated with a crude illustration, vividly tinted in coloured inks. Underneath the title of " Little Dorrit " is the line AS PERFORMED AT THE LONDON THEATRES. Placed against each character in the listed *Dramatis Personæ* is the name of a top-ranking actor. And " Laddie, what a cast ! " as the " old pro " would say. A fanciful selection of the foremost players in London at that period is set down: Charles Dillon for Monsieur Rigaud, Leigh Murray for Arthur Clennam, Samuel Emery for Mr. Flintwinch, George Honey for John Chivery, Walter Lacy for Tite Barnacle, Mrs. Stirling for Mrs. Hollands and Miss Ternan for Little Dorrit; which Miss Ternan (Maria, Fanny or Ellen) it does not say, nor does it matter in view of the highly imaginative nature of the cast.

The play, entirely different from the one at the Strand, is in two acts although the description at the beginning is " a domestic drama in three acts." The prolixity of Cooper gives way to a breath-taking brevity and the scenes are abrupt to a degree. For example, here is one; all of it !

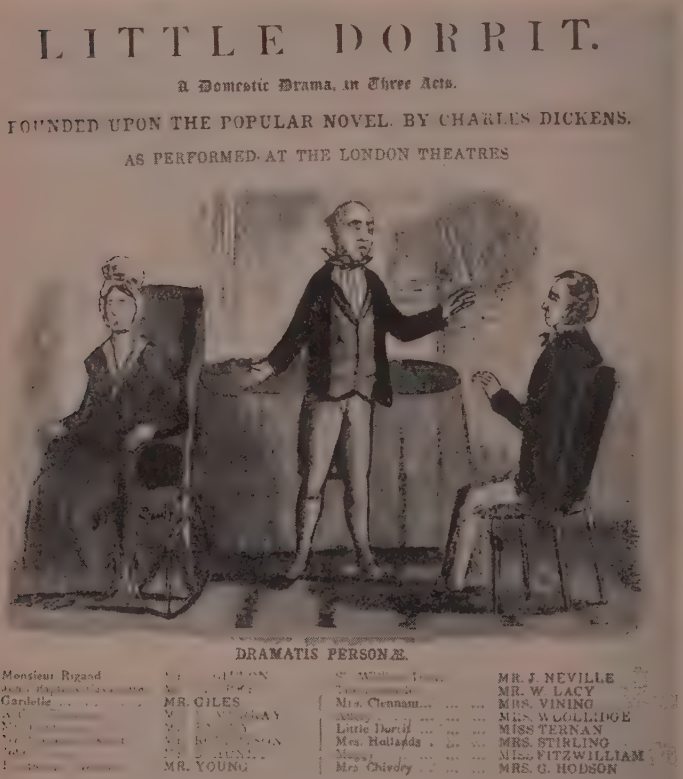
Act I. Scene 4. Antique Antichamber.

(Enter Clennam, followed by Affrey. R.H.)

Clen. Affrey, what girl was that I saw just now, almost hidden by the dark corner ?

Affrey. Oh ! Little Dorrit. She's nothing, she's a whim of hers.

Clen. I take a great interest in this stranger, and I desire to know who she is.



By courtesy of The Victoria and Albert Museum

Affrey. Well her name is Little Dorrit, she works for your mother, and besides her consideration money, her daily contract includes meals. But she's an enigma.

Clen. I must make a few enquiries about her elsewhere, you'll excuse me, Mrs. Affrey. (Exit L.H.)

Affrey. Well to be sure, only look at that. If he finds out what I've been months trying to do without effect, I shall say he's a clever one too. (Exit R.H.)

End of Scene.

No beating about the bush here. Indeed the text reads like one used in the Toy Theatre of those days, save for the fact that the needful instructions for the manipulation of the cardboard players are absent. The suggestion that the piece was given at a Benefit, or similar performance, where all the leading lights listed might have been brought together, can be dismissed. This *Little Dorrit* is too intolerable a concoction to have occupied the time and attention of serious players. With such a galaxy of names there must have been some reference to the event in the Press, and afterwards in biographies and memoirs. All sources are silent.

Though the only dramatisation of *Little Dorrit* played in London proper was at the Strand, stray versions of the novel were staged in some of the provincial centres. At the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, on May 29th, 1857, a *Little Dorrit* drama was produced for the Benefit Night of William Harker, a character actor of repute in Scotland and the North of England. Harker, incidentally a forebear of the scene-painting Harkers, played Mr. Dorrit and probably adapted the play. It is not generally known that Henry Irving appeared that evening as the dandified Edmund Sparkler, an individual omitted from the earlier stage versions. Irving was then a member of the stock company at the Theatre Royal and, perforce, acted supporting rôles to various stars visiting the Modern Athens. In a few years he was to eclipse them all.

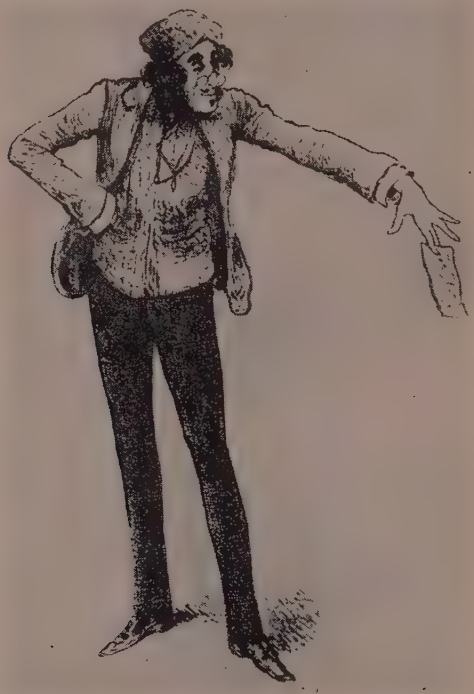
A version of *Little Dorrit*, not noticeably performed, was on the list of Edward Hastings, a play agent in the early Eighteen-Seventies. About the same time Murray Wood, author of several dramatisations from Dickens, placed *Little Dorrit* among the number of his achievements. It may, probably may not, have been produced somewhere when he was on tour with his actress wife, Virginia Blackwood.

The story of *Little Dorrit*, undoubtedly, influenced James Albery when he wrote his comedy *The Two Roses*, given for the first time at the Vaudeville Theatre on June 4th, 1870. Old Mr. Dorrit was the model for Digby Grant, a character created by Irving, now an established player in the West End. Chilled by poverty and sinking in debt, Grant is anxious to place his two daughters in the warmth of comfortable matrimony. Then, unexpectedly, he inherits a fortune only to behave like the proverbial beggar on horseback. Irving made a big hit in the part and later, when in command at the Lyceum, he revived the play there.

Dickens's story appeared even less on the stage in America than in Britain. An anonymous *Little Dorrit* was played at the Bowery Theatre in New York on November 18th, 1864, the piece being one in the repertory of Mollie Williams and Felix A. Vincent, visiting stars of a minor magnitude. After which the subject faded from the professional theatre. An extract from the novel furnished a one-act play, *Something wrong Somewhere* by L. J. Lugsden, published in 1923, having previously been acted by the Dickens Fellowship of Toronto. Other printed sketches were *A Lesson in Deportment* by Mary Farrah, published in England, and *The Circumlocution Office*, published in Chicago by T. S. Dennison and presumably performed in that city.

Turning to Europe, a German adaptation *Kleine Dorrit* by

Franz Schoenthen was given at the Imperial Hofburg in Vienna on October 5th, 1905, with Herr Thiemig as the Father of the Marshalsea and Fraulein Retty as Little Dorritt. The same work was afterwards played in Berlin, September 15th, 1906, when the parts were taken by Herr Volmer and Fraulein Eschborn. The popularity of the adaptation was sufficient to encourage the making of a German film of *Kleine Dorrit*.



Henry Irving as Digby Grant

By courtesy of The Victoria and Albert Museum

A current theatrical success in Moscow is a Russian version of the story produced in December 1953. The crowded and enthusiastic houses for the play at the Konstantin Stanislavsky Theatre where it is being shown are a tribute to Dickens even though the emphasis of this work is on the horrors of capitalism and all that was worst in an England of a century ago.

Martin Chuzzlewit, adopted by Charles Lefeaux as a Radio Serial, is to be presented by the B.B.C. on Sunday evenings, beginning about the end of August.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Royal Salute from Dickens

Sir,

Recently in Melbourne I have been giving public readings of poetry and prose ranging from Christopher Fry to Shakespeare. In December I chose the theme of Christmas and included "Christmas at Dingley Dell," which proved one of the most popular items. Such projects are aided in England by the weather, but Christmas in Australia comes at mid-summer. The platform for my reading was decorated with hydrangeas instead of holly and mistletoe, and it was very hot indeed. Such is the magic of Dickens however, that one could forget the sub-tropical climate and easily imagine oneself the guest of the hospitable Wardle at snow-bound Dingley Dell.

Later in the year, just before Her Majesty's visit to Melbourne, another programme was devoted to "Royalty and Pageantry." My knowledge of Dickens was not sufficiently wide to find a suitable extract for this occasion and I appealed to my mother[1] in London, who in turn wrote to Emlyn Williams. He, I have since learned, turned to the Dickens Fellowship, with the result that I received the enchanting salutation to another royal couple, which appeared in the Coronation Number of *The Dickensian*. That I was delighted and most grateful goes without saying but my audience really loved it. It so exactly described the love and affection that everyone in Australia was about to demonstrate so fully to their own beloved Royal couple. No one could believe that it had been written a hundred years ago by a great Englishman whose loyal affection was as great as theirs. The reading of that charming passage from *Sketches of Young Couples* made us all feel that in our Royal Family we have an enduring greatness that transcends the passage of time. Yet so delightfully human were these words of Dickens that we were conscious not only of our humble duty to our Sovereign Lady and her Consort, but also of the knowledge that we are all part of one huge friendly family.

It is a long way from London to Australia but the magic of Dickens showed us, in its own inimitable way, that our loyalty, our desire to serve and owe kinship with each other through the persons of our beloved Royal Couple makes nothing of the oceans between us.

John Casson.

[1] Dame Sybil Thorndike, D.B.E.—Editor.

Knowledge is Power and *Hard Times*

Sir,

In his interesting article in the Spring Number of *The Dickensian*, Mr. J. T. Boulton suggests that *Hard Times* may, in part, have been a reply to *Knowledge is Power*. He quotes a letter from Dickens to Charles Knight, dated January 30th, 1854, but an examination of the complete letter (Nonesuch edition, Vol. II, p. 619) shows that the year should be 1855 and that Dickens has made a slip unnoticed by the earlier editors of his letters and by Charles Knight in *Passages of a Working Life*, 1865. Not

only does Dickens refer to the sufferings of our soldiers in the Crimean winter, but to a reading he had recently given in Bradford, which took place on December 28th, 1854.

Hard Times had been published several months earlier, and Charles Knight seems to have sent *Knowledge is Power* to the creator of Gradgrind with some trepidation, and with excuses for appearing in so cold a guise.

Dickens hastened to reassure him (before reading the book) and justly so. Though Knight may have bowed down to the Political Economists, his main interests were literary and antiquarian, and his life's work was the diffusion of good literature by cheapening book production. In employing utilitarian arguments, he was probably trying to justify the arts to factory workers and employers, and certainly not expressing his own values.

PANSY PAKENHAM.

SIR,

I am grateful to Miss Pakenham for pointing out my mistake and to you for the opportunity to reply to her comments. First I must, of course, accept her rebuke over the date of Dickens's letter and apologise for my carelessness. I would contend, however—and probably Miss Pakenham would agree since she says nothing to the contrary—that the main force of my argument remains unimpaired. More important than what I called "historical coincidence"—which is now exploded—is the illumination given to "Dickens's penetration and moral values" in *Hard Times* by the comparison with *Knowledge is Power*. This was—and remains—my main plea.

I cannot agree with the criticism of my interpretation of Knight's book. Miss Pakenham's attack is two-pronged: she assumes (quite rightly) that I mean what I say, but claims that Knight was "certainly not expressing his own values." This I cannot accept. While I admire Knight's valiant and important efforts to make the works of first-rate writers more readily available, I would point out that he obviously thought it purposeful to re-issue in *Knowledge is Power* the two short pieces *Capital and Labour* and *The Results of Machinery* first published twenty-four years earlier. In view of this fact, to suggest that in *Knowledge is Power* Knight relies on values not his own is seriously to question his moral integrity. From what I know of his life and work I am not willing to take this step. Moreover it is not merely a question of Knight's trying to justify the arts to factory workers and employers: his arguments (which I cite) about the value of literature are all of a piece with the general utilitarian approach to problems of industrial society. He is, above all, interested in measures designed to cheapen the manufacture of goods. Is this interest fundamentally different from that which urged Knight himself to strive for—to quote Miss Pakenham—"cheapening book production"?

Knight's *Penny Magazine*—one of his most important publishing ventures—provides additional evidence. The factual approach to literature and life which characterises the Magazine (and Chambers'

Edinburgh Journal) prompted Leigh Hunt to bring out his *London Journal*. This was to be " a little more southern and literary," presumably because the " useful knowledge " supplied by Knight and his collaborators was too factual and too little provoking of the " wonder " which Dickens stresses in *Hard Times*.

In the autobiography—where Knight reveals himself most clearly—he is rarely concerned with " the understanding heart " as Wordsworth and Dickens would have conceived it; he wants the poor man—through the agency of the *Penny Magazine*, *Penny Cyclopaedia*, *Pictorial Shakespeare*, etc.—to be " made a thinking man—a man capable of intellectual pleasures." We are reminded, at a different level, of the education of the young J. S. Mill; we are reminded too of Sleary—" people . . . can't be alwayth a working, nor yet they can't be alwayth a learning "; and once more the incompatibility of the values of Dickens and Knight is emphasised.

J. T. Boulton.

University of Nottingham.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

Brief contributions are invited for this page. (*Press cuttings unacceptable*).

Birmingham

The 10th Session since the Birmingham Branch was restarted has been a year of both gladness and sadness. We have suffered bereavements and have extended our love and sympathy to the bereaved ones. We have had much gladness in meeting together and enjoying the lectures and other evenings, not least among these were two excellent evenings given by our own members—one by the ladies and the other by the gentlemen; both very creditable performances. Another of our members, the Rev. Arthur Jones, opened the Session with a most enjoyable talk which he called " Dickens To-day." In December Miss D. L. Minards came from the Dickens House, London, and spoke to us about " The Dickens Circle." It was kind of her to give of her valuable time and expert knowledge and we enjoyed the occasion. The March Meeting was an exceptional treat; Mr. John Greaves came and gave a truly wonderful recital of *Oliver Twist*. It was an evening to be remembered. Our Christmas Party, at Wimbush's Café, lived up to its reputation and was highly successful. Our thanks are due to all who helped to make it so enjoyable. The Dramatic Group have our very special congratulations. *Martin Chuzzlewit* was cleverly adapted by Mr. Victor Simons and produced most satisfactorily by Mr. Simons and Mr. John Venables, as reported on another page. A true social spirit was obtained by the excellent home-made refreshments which our members so generously gave, and our thanks are due to them and all of the Dramatic Group; the latter not only entertained us but have played *Martin Chuzzlewit* on two other occasions in Birmingham and also for the Fellowship in Rugby. E.H.F-D.

Presentation at Blackburn

During the Birthday Dinner of the Blackburn Branch, the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Leo Mason, was the surprised recipient of a gold

watch and a pipe, as a mark of the affection and esteem in which he is held by his fellow members and to commemorate his 25 years' association with the branch and his 20 years' secretaryship. The news will be hailed with great pleasure far beyond the confines of Blackburn for Mr. Mason has not only been the driving force in the Fellowship there for so many years, but is as popular in other Lancashire branches, and elsewhere. A brilliant speaker with a highly individual brand of humour, he is a most welcome figure at Conference, and his many contributions to this magazine are always of outstanding importance.

The thanks and congratulations of the Fellowship are tendered to the following retiring and newly-appointed Branch secretaries. To Mr. F. G. C. Henwood, who replaces Miss D. Edgar at Dunedin, and to Mrs. M. Ripley, who replaces Miss E. MacCormac, at Boston, Mass.

A hearty welcome to Britain is accorded to Mrs. Robert Hood of Marinette, Miss Helen d'Arcy of New York, Mrs. L. S. Bagley, Mrs. M. Ripley, and Mrs. Livingston Stebbins of Boston, Mass., and Mrs. Elizabeth Lee of Sydney.

Obituary

The Liverpool Branch of the Dickens Fellowship regret to announce the death on April 16th of Miss M. Musgrove Kelly in her 86th year. She was a Past-President and a very enthusiastic Dickensian. She joined the Fellowship at Nottingham; later on coming to Liverpool as Inspectress of Domestic Science at the schools. She joined wholeheartedly in our activities, was loved by all, and will be greatly missed. She was last among us at the Dickens Birthday Dinner on February 13th. B.O.

After 28 years of faithful service, death has deprived the Eastbay Branch of its well-loved Secretary, Mrs. Josephine Naas.

Toronto mourns the death of its President, Professor E. A. Dale, Classics Professor at the University of that city. Born in Edinburgh, and educated at Oxford, he taught at Dundee before coming to Canada. A member of most literary societies in Toronto, perhaps his greatest enthusiasm was for drama.

In London, Miss Rose Smith-Rose had hardly completed a year of office as Chairman of the Executive Committee when, after only a few days' illness, she died on May 19th. She had been an exceptionally able Chairman, her term being the climax of 20 years' membership of the Fellowship. Her last appearance among us was at the annual committee dinner, but three weeks before her death. She resigned her position in the Civil Service in 1916 to join Lena Ashwell's Company playing to troops in France. A member of the Concert Artists' Association almost from its inception, she served as its Secretary throughout World War II, and had recently completed two years as its Chairman.

We also deeply regret to announce the death, after long suffering patiently borne, of Mrs. Pool of Manchester. The deepest sympathy of her many friends is extended to her daughter, Miss Marion Pool, Hon. Secretary of the Manchester Branch.

WALTER T. SPENCER

(M. E. SPENCER)

27 New Oxford Street,

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The Dickens Fellowship

LONDON MEETINGS

June. Tues. 8th. Eve of the Anniversary of the death of Charles Dickens. A wreath will be laid on the grave in Westminster Abbey. Meet: West Door, 6 p.m.

Sat. 19th. Afternoon and Evening Ramble to Barnet, conducted by Mrs. Jane Bacon. Meet: Barnet Underground Station, Northern Line, 3 p.m.

Sun. 20th. Dickens Commemorative Service, Southwark Cathedral, 6.30 p.m. **Note change of date.**

July. Sat. 3rd. Annual Motor Coach Pilgrimage. Salisbury and Stonehenge. Tickets, inclusive of lunch, tea, and all gratuities, 30*s*.

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